

Candidate Briefing Pack

Executive Business Manager Dorset Secondary Cluster

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Dear Applicant

Executive Business Manager: Dorset Secondary Cluster

Welcome to the Dorset Secondary Cluster of United Learning and thank you for your interest in the Executive Business Manager role. This is a senior, strategic leadership role, reporting directly to the Regional Director, and provides a superb opportunity to shape and support the successful futures of four schools, each at a different stage in their journey.

United Learning is an exciting organisation to work for. There is a real focus on developing people and empowering innovation; education leaders enjoy unrivalled opportunities to learn and to grow whilst staff across the board are appreciated and celebrated. We look to 'cluster' Schools to share resources and expertise and to give staff local opportunities to develop further. Whilst there is commitment to nurturing the unique ethos of each school, our common mission in bringing out the 'Best in Everyone' shines through. We aim to offer more to both colleagues and young people than any single school could offer alone.

I look forward to working with the successful candidate to build upon our existing cluster in a way that will exceed the basic requirements of our schools through providing outstanding services to all stakeholders. A key benefit of being part of United Learning is to work with our central office team who provide expert support in the varying functions that the Executive Business Manager will lead. You will have a close working relationship with United Learning's central Finance and HR Business Partners as well as our central Estates, Health and Safety and IT leads.

Strong relationship building across all levels of staff, and especially with each of the Principals within our Cluster, will be vital in order to provide the level of support and challenge needed, whilst also developing and leading your own team to excellence. You will see that there is a wide-ranging job description for this post; this represents the scope of activities undertaken within the support functions of the Cluster. Financial management and budgetary control is at the heart of this role, so proven financial acumen will be a key consideration when assessing your application. Your personal qualities, including your ability to build and sustain productive relationships in a variety of contexts, are similarly important.

If you are looking for an exciting, challenging and highly rewarding role that offers a strong commitment to professional development, I encourage you to apply. United Learning is an inclusive employer and is committed to creating and sustaining a more ethnically diverse workforce. Therefore, we would very much welcome applications from professionals of all backgrounds who share our commitment but especially those of minority ethnic origin. I do hope you will get in touch with any questions you may have ahead of submitting your application.

I very much look forward to hearing from you.



Stuart Ingram
Regional Director

About United Learning

United Learning is a group of schools which aims to provide excellent education to children and young people across the country. We seek to improve the life chances of all the children and young people we serve and make it our mission to bring out ‘the best in everyone’ – students, staff, parents and the wider community. We uniquely comprise schools in both the state and the independent sectors. We currently educate over 70,000 students and employ over 11,000 members of staff including over 7,000 teachers.

As a group, we can offer more to both staff and young people than any single school could offer alone. The growing range of outstanding group-wide activities that we can provide will mean that more young people will have truly exceptional and inspiring experiences. We believe that our Group contains the most developed relationships and practical interaction between independent and state schools in the country, creating benefits for all the schools involved.

United Learning comprises both United Church Schools Trust, which operates our fee-paying independent schools, and United Learning Trust, which operates our state-funded academies. To find out more about United Learning, please visit the website: www.unitedlearning.org.uk

As part of United Learning, the Dorset Secondary Cluster schools share the objective of bringing out ‘the best in everyone’, enabling each student to become a balanced, happy and articulate person with intellectual freedom, confidence, compassion, integrity and a lifelong love of learning.

Terms and conditions of employment

United Learning’s normal terms of conditions of employment apply for the position of Executive Business Manager for the Dorset Secondary Cluster.

The final detailed terms and conditions are subject to agreement between United Learning and the successful candidate and will be reflected in the formal employment contract.

- **Location: Host School:** TBC, however with work carried out across all cluster schools.
- **Working hours:** Monday to Friday, 37.5 hours per week. The hours are to be negotiated, dependent on the individuals’ circumstances, but generally we would look to cover the hours of 08:00 – 16:00 with a 30 minute unpaid break for lunch. We are open to requests for flexible or part-time working; we encourage open and informal conversations about your work-life balance needs.
- **Start date:** As soon as possible.
- **Starting salary:** Competitive
- **Ill Health Pay:** Our Policy allows for a five-year sliding qualification period, at the end of which, you will be entitled to full pay for 50 working days and half pay for 50 working days.
- **Holidays:** You will receive an enhanced 6 weeks’ paid holiday per year (pro-rata for part-time staff), in addition to public holidays which fall within your normal working year.
- **Pension Scheme:** You are eligible to be a member of the Local Government Pension Scheme which currently has a 19% employer contribution.
- **Death in Service:** As an employee of United Learning, your beneficiaries are entitled to a lump sum payment in the event of your death in service.
- **Private Healthcare Scheme:** You are eligible to opt into the Group’s chosen Provider for Healthcare, in which we’ll cover the cost of your medical treatments (as per the agreement). You can also extend the cover to include family members at an additional charge, deducted from your salary.

In addition to the above, we are also committed to providing exciting employee benefits, for example a Health Cash Plan, Cycle 2 Work Scheme, a Car Lease Scheme and a free will writing service. We also give you access to Westfield Rewards; a scheme that offers a huge range of perks including discounts at major supermarkets and other retailers.

Our Ethos

Our approach to education is underpinned by a sense of moral purpose and commitment to doing what is right for children and young people. We believe in supporting our colleagues to achieve excellence and in acting with integrity in all our dealings within and beyond the Group. We believe the safety and welfare of all children and young people is paramount. We summarise this ethos as ‘the best in everyone’.

This ethos underpins our core values:

AMBITION – to achieve the best for ourselves and others;

CONFIDENCE – to have the courage of our convictions and to take risks in the right cause;

CREATIVITY – to imagine possibilities and make them real;

RESPECT – for ourselves and others in all that we do;

ENTHUSIASM – to seek opportunity, find what is good and pursue talents and interests;

DETERMINATION – to overcome obstacles and achieve success.

As a single organisation, we seek to bring together the best of independent and state sectors, respecting both traditions and learning from each. We believe that each of our schools is and should be distinctive – committed to developing its own strengths and identity while sharing our core values to promote service, compassion and generosity.

Continuing Professional Development

We believe that successful organisations make a priority of developing their staff; all the more so in education, where the people of the organisation are its most important asset. While the development of all staff is important, we make support and professional development of senior leaders a particular priority, given the impact that leaders have on the life of staff and students alike.

We work on the basis that each of us, however effective, can always improve.

The new Executive Business Manager will set personal development objectives with the Regional Director each year and will be supported to achieve them. They will have the benefit of accessing a range of networks, training events and school visits. We provide 360-degree feedback as part of professional development.

We believe that schools are at their best when they are autonomous and able to develop a distinctive ethos, reflecting the needs of their students and the context within which they work. The Group can get behind the work of leaders in schools through creating strong networks, providing outstanding educational support and professional development, and by taking the strain of professional functional support. We aim to ensure that the technology, finance, HR, estates and data support is provided more effectively and efficiently than would otherwise be possible, so that leaders can focus on educational leadership.

The newly appointed Executive Business Manager will also benefit from a comprehensive induction programme.

Our Framework for Excellence

To achieve our mission, our schools prioritise five key principles:

‘THE BEST FROM EVERYONE’

Our aim is to bring out ‘the best in everyone’. So, we must expect the best from everyone, all the time. Every child is a special individual, capable of extraordinary things. Who can know the limits of any child’s potential? So, we expect unreasonably – we constantly challenge children to do what they think they can’t, to persist, to work hard and to be at their best.

From every adult we expect the same: that they are at their best, expect unreasonably of themselves, are determined and resilient and pass those expectations on to the children in all they do. We act with the utmost love, care and good faith – the highest standards come with the greatest attention to the wellbeing of all.

‘POWERFUL KNOWLEDGE’

Our most important purpose is to teach young people things they would not learn outside school, which free them to think and act more powerfully in their lives.

Words and numbers are our most powerful ways of representing the world. Mastery of language and fluent mathematical skills are therefore our top priority. We aim to prepare young people to make a success of their lives: a core entitlement to subject- based learning; the development of talents; an understanding of work and society.

Worthwhile learning is often hard. Inspiring teaching is what gives access to difficult concepts and the thrill of intellectual discovery. Powerful knowledge is not static or backward-looking. It includes the ability to critique, challenge the status quo, think and learn.

‘EDUCATION WITH CHARACTER’

Academic success is very important. Exam passes are an important aspect of that. But there is more to a good education. Our schools also aim to develop character, compassion and service. Young people are expected to contribute to their school and to society; to try things which they think they cannot do; to persist in the face of difficulty; to become resilient in overcoming obstacles; to manage themselves; to work independently on things which challenge them; to work with others and in teams; to be courageous and caring; to lead.

We want young people to look back on a joyful schooling which has inspired and challenged them, given them wide opportunity and prepared them for the ups and downs of life.

‘LEADERSHIP IN EVERY ROLE’

Our children are leaders of the future. We expect them to start today – taking advantage of structured opportunities to lead and taking responsibility for themselves and others. Every adult in the school is a leader. In every word, tone and gesture, they set direction and expectation. We expect every adult to take responsibility and the initiative to do what is right for the children.

All those in formal leadership positions create the climate in which others work. They demand the highest standards, build a performance culture, develop their teams and create the space for others to lead. All leaders listen, grow relationships, act with integrity and care and expect the best from themselves and others in building a happy, confident school.

‘CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT’

However good we are, we can be better. We constantly look for improvements and implement them at pace. We look for ideas for improvement inside the organisation and out; we observe one another; we steal good ideas with pride and look to make them better; we work together to improve.

We always look at the evidence and are rigorous in evaluating impact. We stop or change things which aren't working; we improve things which are. We aim for high leverage: high impact for low effort and low cost. We constantly look to have more impact for less cost and effort and to spend every pound wisely.

How to Apply

For your application to be considered, we will need you to:

Complete an online application form including your personal statement outlining your suitability for the role including how you satisfy the requirements of the Person Specification.

Please provide us with two references. In line with our practice on safer recruitment, we will take up references for all those candidates who proceed to interview, as well as asking candidates to complete a standard application form. The deadline for receipt of applications is 11.59pm on Sunday, 9th August 2026. We reserve the right to bring forward the closing date if we consider that we have received an appropriate number of candidates for the post.

The selection process

We will treat all enquiries, formal and informal, in confidence. The selection process will take place on Monday 10th August 2026.

Further information

To arrange an informal discussion regarding the role please email Stuart Ingram, Regional Director stuart.ingram@unitedlearning.org.uk to arrange a mutually convenient time for a telephone conversation.

Safeguarding

United Learning is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff to share this commitment. An enhanced DBS (previously CRB) check is required for all successful applicants.