

Chief Executive Officer/ Academy Improvement Lead Recruitment Pack



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WHAT WE WOULD LIKE YOU TO SHOW US IN YOUR APPLICATION

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Welcome from the Chair of the Board of Trustees

As Chair of The Agora Learning Partnership, I would like to thank you for your interest in our Chief Executive Officer/Academy Improvement Lead (CEO/AIL) recruitment pack. The Trustees hope this pack will help you in deciding to apply for the crucially important position we have on offer. If, however, having read through the pack, you still have any queries please do not hesitate to contact either myself or Lynne Wilson-Leary (interim CEO/AIL) and we will do our best to provide you with an answer.

Here at Agora children are always at the centre of everything we do; the Trustees believe they deserve access to the very best leaders and teachers, and what we are about in this process is to appoint an exceptional candidate to lead our dedicated team of professionals. We are looking for a special person who is not only able to lead the Trust strategically but someone who is also able to offer no-nonsense practical help, advice and support to our schools so they are able to grow even stronger in the longer term.

Agora is a well-established multi academy trust (MAT) consisting, at present, of nine primary schools. We are ambitious and wish to grow this number over time, but in a way that fits with the ethos of our trust. We believe we have something special in Agora and it is a prime consideration for the Trustees to ensure we maintain the very special relationship the Trustees and the central team have with our schools. There is therefore a strong sense of ownership and belonging to the Partnership which provides a good foundation for its success.

Agora already has well-established systems and practices that are highly efficient and effective and support our schools extremely well. The central team is very highly regarded by headteachers and chairs of our academy governing boards for the work they do and the support they provide. Our regular mechanisms of feedback clearly demonstrate this. We are looking for someone to help us enhance our existing structures and create new ones for us that will support our schools and children even more.

Finally, we are looking for an exceptional candidate with ambition to grow our MAT into one of the most successful locally and the remuneration and benefits package will be scaled to match that journey. If you are confident that you have the skills, drive and vision to make that a reality, we sincerely hope that you will apply.

Patrick McAteer

Chair of the Board of Trustees

About us

THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE AGORA LEARNING PARTNERSHIP

The decision to set up the Trust arose at the request of schools. Following numerous consultation events with headteachers and chairs of governing bodies in 2016/17 work then took place with schools to shape the model and to develop the values and vision and scheme of delegation.

Following approval to be a sponsor on 21st December 2016 the first wave of schools joined in September 2017, with a further wave following in January 2018.

OUR VISION, ASPIRATIONS AND ETHOS

Our vision is to be one of the highest performing and constantly improving Trusts in the country with capacity and capability to support others for the benefit of all children.

We are an inclusive and collaborative learning partnership, bringing like-minded people together 'to work together, learn together and succeed together'. Schools and academies in Hertfordshire have a long and strong history of working together and of shaping the landscape to create an environment in which schools support each other and children thrive.

We are committed to ensuring that every child in our Trust achieves of their best and that they develop the resilience that will support them to maintain strong physical and emotional health, now and for their future.

The Agora Learning Partnership is inclusive and has a vision of being a cross phase trust. We do not intend to turn schools away that are not yet good or have financial pressures, but in order to manage growth in a sustainable way, our growth strategy aims for at least 80% of our academies being good or better at any one time and financially secure before adding more.

As the employer of all staff across the Trust, we want to drive improvement further and faster and to also improve the efficiency of our academies through shared resource and collective procurement. Our drive will be to ensure every academy in our Trust is judged as good or outstanding and provides a well-planned, broad and balanced curriculum

that equips all pupils with the confidence, ambition and team working skills to succeed in later life.

The Agora Learning Partnership aims to be a cutting edge multi academy trust, at the forefront of educational thinking, employing experienced and effective staff with vision and an appetite for innovation that can maximise learning and transform children's lives.

The Agora Learning Partnership works alongside other local authority maintained schools, academies, multi-academy trusts and local Diocesan Boards in Hertfordshire and on our borders. We welcome opportunities to collaborate, share good practice and learn from each other.

"Freedom can be quite lonely and in this Trust we are not left on our own"

Trust headteacher

"Collaboration and partnership across the schools work well"

Trust headteachers

OUR OBJECTIVES

Work together, learn together and succeed together

To benefit and add value for every child, member of staff and our wider community

EVERY CHILD

All children access and enjoy learning through a stimulating, creative and stretching curriculum, taught by high quality, well trained teachers

Every single child is enabled to achieve their best and gains the qualifications, experiences and skills they need to be successful now and in their future

Provide for every child to engage in at least one significant extra-curricular, special and memorable event every term; widening their life experiences and enhancing social mobility

Support robust physical and mental health and wellbeing for all children including aspiring to zero exclusions. The MAT will collaborate to look after its own children, whatever their background, disadvantages or challenges

EVERY MEMBER OF STAFF

Prioritise professional development opportunities and career progression pathways to attract high quality applicants and retain the best staff

Staff and pupils are equipped with technologies that support and transform learning

'Incubate innovation.' Encourage creative teachers to thrive through working collaboratively; sharing ideas and expertise, encouraging and nurturing new developments and embedding practice that works

Create the conditions that support robust physical and mental health and wellbeing for all staff across the Trust including work life balance

OUR WIDER COMMUNITY

Every academy in the Trust is at least good and is constantly aspiring to be even better; supporting each other on that journey

Respect each school's individuality, ethos and autonomy so that local decision making is at the heart of school improvement

Ensure every school in the Trust is financially viable and is using resources effectively to maximise learning. Provide extensive support to academies not yet good or financially secure, to move them quickly to improvement

Accountable to communities we serve, work closely with the wider community and families to educate and inspire the global citizens of the present and future

MEMBERS AND TRUSTEES

The Trust's Members and Trustees are accountable for the educational outcomes of every child in every academy in the Trust, and the overall combined success of the Trust, including its financial viability, sustainability and integrity. They work to ensure that the Trust's sense of responsibility and accountability for every child's success permeates through all our academies, every department, every Academy Governing Board (AGB) and every member of staff.

Name and role	Skill set/experience
Timothy Bailey Trustee, Vice Chair of Board of Trustees, member of Finance, Audit, Risk and Estates Committee	Senior executive role in blue chip organization (multi-site operations), strategy for growth, efficiency improvements, financial controls, organizational design, CPD/people development, understanding data, school governance (chair of governing body)
Paul Hill Member	Qualified accountant (FCA) with broad experience in finance with several companies in the commercial sector, before specialising in academies finance since 2008. Experience of being a Vice-Chair and Chair of Governors in schools and experience as a director of an education support services organisation.
Sal Jarvis Member	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education), University of Westminster, strategic leadership (education, policy, learning, teaching and quality assurance), teacher training, wider children's work force, school governance
Graham Lane Trustee, member of Finance, Audit, Risk and Estates Committee	Local community board membership, (HE, FE, LEP, Chamber of Commerce), IT strategic consultancy and service delivery, school governance (chair)
Peter Martin Trustee, Chair of Finance, Audit, Risk and Estates Committee	Senior executive role in blue chip financial organizations (executive director/chairman – P&L accountability, multi-site operations), risk management, sales performance, people management, operational effectiveness, school governance (chair)
Patrick McAteer Trustee, Chair of Board of Trustees	Primary school improvement (strategic lead), headteacher, leading significant improvement in the quality of primary education across a local authority, people management, understanding data, charity trustee
Bonnie O'Dell Trustee, member of HR and Standards and Curriculum committees	A senior treasury manager in Hertfordshire. A civil servant before qualifying as an accountant and working for several blue chip organisations. Over twenty years' experience in finance and treasury roles, including financial control, statutory reporting, financial site management, cash management and risk assessment.
Niraj Shah Trustee, member of Finance, Audit, Risk and Estates committee	A qualified actuary, with 24 years' experience in insurance and financial services, operating both at executive and non-executive director level.
Julia Shepard Trustee, member of HR and Standards and Curriculum committees	Successful secondary headship, secondary/special school improvement, leadership, strategic development and partnerships, education finance and governance, PFI school build
Carol Shutkever Trustee, member of HR and Standards and Curriculum committees	A solicitor and ex corporate partner in a London law firm for 20 years. Carol headed the firm's corporate governance advisory team, covering topics such as board structures and behaviours, accounting and audit, risk management, culture, diversity and stakeholder engagement.
Andrew Simmons, OBE Member, Trustee, Chair of HR and Standards and Curriculum Committees	Education, skills, children's support services, preparation for adulthood, national and local policy development, management of multi-million-pound budgets, working with politicians (local and national), board chair (National Connexions Network)
Matthew Taylor Trustee, member of Finance, Audit, Risk and Estates committee	A solicitor and Partner in a law firm in the City of London specializing in infrastructure and construction dispute resolution. Matthew also regularly provides live project advice to help manage risk and avoid disputes during the procurement and delivery of major infrastructure and construction projects.

OUR COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

The Agora Learning Partnership works within all the communities which our academies serve. Our communities vary in terms of rural and urban settings and affluent and deprived contexts. As an employer we welcome staff who have deep knowledge and understanding of schools and academies and their communities and how best to bring about improvement through proven collaborative methods.

We know it is important to use our contacts and local knowledge to succession-plan and recruit strong, effective and skilled academy governors where they are needed, deploying effective governors, including NLGs, to support Academy Governing Boards (AGBs) and to induct new governors. We have built up a strong network of academy headteachers and Chairs of AGBs.

We plan to encourage and build on existing community partnerships and broker and strengthen others. The Trust is outward facing, ensuring that partnerships with health, the police, social care, the business community and creative organisations are contributing to the wellbeing, personal development and career opportunities for all children educated in the Trust's schools as well as helping our pupils to develop a strong sense of the importance of community, volunteering and serving others alongside other important core British values.

We see the wider community as part of the rich resource upon which our academies will be encouraged to draw upon to stimulate curiosity, widen opportunities and deepen learning.

The Trust works with a range of partners to secure the best value school improvement and business services to meet the needs of its academies.

"We have autonomy to meet the differing needs of children in each school"

Trust headteacher

"Headteachers are not 'done to', we can make decisions. I wouldn't necessarily believe it if I was told, but now I am in the Trust I can see it working"

Trust headteacher

OUR CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

We believe that the Trust's role is to create the climate for possibility, investing in a broad and balanced curriculum and assessment framework and associated professional development that will bring about the best teaching and facilitate the greatest learning.

The key to learning is an exciting, broad and relevant curriculum that acknowledges that all children are different and need access to a range of experiences; where skilled teaching is about provoking curiosity, engaging interest, encouraging creativity and stimulating learning not just delivery of content. The responsibility for getting this important job done is devolved to individual academies.

All of our primary phase academies are required to adopt the Primary National Curriculum for key stages 1 and 2. Academies with early years classes also adhere to the requirements of the statutory guidance in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Individual academies have responsibility for tailoring the curriculum to meet the needs of the children in their school community. Academies also have responsibility for ensuring that they have a planned programme of assessment so they can monitor and evaluate the impact of their curriculum on pupils' learning and development.

All of our academies are expected to ensure that their curriculum design includes:

- Access to a high quality broad and balanced curriculum which includes opportunities to try new things, pursue special interests and develop individual talents
- Carefully chosen and carefully placed component parts that enable pupils to know and remember more about their learning
- Regular opportunities to rehearse and apply prior learning to help pupils learn and assimilate new content
- Wider opportunities and experiences that raise pupils' aspirations and helps them set and achieve personal goals
- Equality of opportunity and closing the gap for disadvantaged pupils
- Provision for pupils to acquire a strong command of the basics of English and mathematics
- A focus on fostering an enjoyment of learning and a thirst for more
- Acquisition of effective skills, knowledge and understanding in all subjects
- An emphasis on developing the confidence and skills to help pupils move successfully into the next stage of their education and/or into employment
- Promotion of fundamental British values so that all pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain

- Opportunities to build pupils' confidence, ambition and team-work skills and to develop their entrepreneurial thinking
- Teaching pupils how to maintain good mental and physical health, which will support them throughout their lives
- Opportunities for parents/carers to be involved in and to support their child's learning

STANDARDS OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

Standards of teaching and learning of the highest quality are secured through:

- Ensuring all staff have access to a wide range of high quality, focused CPD to help them to continuously improve their practice and be innovative in their teaching
- Strategic deployment of staff within and across our academies
- Sharing expertise across academies
- Offering attractive employment conditions so that high quality staff want to work in our academies
- Ensuring staff have access to the resources they need to help them teach well
- Ensuring our academy leaders support and develop their staff and take action to address any underperformance
- Robust Trust-wide monitoring of the impact of teaching, learning and the curriculum on pupils' achievement with swift support to secure any areas for improvement

OUR ACADEMIES

Our academies are supported and encouraged to develop as their own distinctive institutions and to tailor their curriculum so that it meets the needs of their children. We believe this is how our academies can best serve their communities. We do, however, work within a common structure, for example common policies across the trust, and ethos rooted within the Agora Learning Partnership's vision and values. Currently our Trust consists of:

Alban Wood Primary
Bromet Primary
The Grange Academy
Meryfield Community Primary
The Orchard Primary

Oxhey Wood Primary
Warren Dell Primary
Waterside Academy
Wilbury Junior

What we can offer you

Hertfordshire is a great place to live, work and bring up families. Its schools are recognised as amongst the best in the region and nationally. It is a county with much to commend it; on the fringe of London with easy and fast access to the capital but also with a rural feel and many traditions.

We recognise that successful people place value on a range of benefits associated with their careers including receiving professional recognition, commensurate financial reward, job satisfaction, opportunity to innovate and a balanced approach to work and personal time. As your future employer we place importance on all of these aspects too.

- Basic salary £90,000
- Competitive pension scheme
- Access to continuous professional development opportunities
- Strong central team (CFO, Company Secretary/Policy Officer) existing partnerships and networks
- Access to the many benefits associated with living and working in Hertfordshire

The recruitment process

ADVERTISING BEGINS:	Wednesday 15 th July 2020
CLOSING DATE:	Midday, Monday 14 th September 2020
SHORTLISTING:	Wednesday 16 th September 2020
INTERVIEW DATE:	Friday 25 th September 2020

For an informal discussion regarding the role, please contact Patrick McAteer, Chair of ALP MAT Board of Trustees:
patrick.mcateer@agoralearning.co.uk

Please read the job outline and person specification below and then download and complete the application form and the personal statement form from our website <https://agoralearning.co.uk/about-us/working-for-us/> and return to HR@agoralearning.co.uk by the closing date of midday, Monday 14th September 2020

What we would like to know about you

Please respond to the questions below in your personal statement:

What skills, knowledge and experience do you have?

The job outline for the post is detailed below. How well do you match what we are looking for in terms of your skills, knowledge and experience?

What additional expertise will you bring?

There may be skills, knowledge and experience that you have which don't fit neatly into our job outline. Are there ways in which you think you can bring additional expertise? Please include information we might find useful.

Are you the right person for our organisation and team?

Please look at the list of personal attributes included in the person specification which we think would be valuable for the postholder. Tell us why you think you would be a good match for our organisation.

What is your evidence base and track record?

What would you like to tell us that demonstrates measurable impact of your work that you are most proud of?

Job outline

JOB TITLE:	Chief Executive Officer/Academy Improvement Lead
JOB REF:	ALP CO006
HOURS:	Full time
SALARY:	£90,000 per annum
CONTRACT:	Permanent
RESPONSIBLE TO:	Agora Learning Partnership Board of Trustees
REPORTS TO:	Chair of the Agora Learning Partnership Board of Trustees
RESPONSIBLE FOR:	Academy leaders and central support roles

PURPOSE OF THE JOB

This post holder is pivotal in securing overall strategic leadership, growth and the wider success of the Trust.

You will be an outstanding strategic leader, able to develop and articulate the vision, values and ethos of the Agora Learning Partnership and will inspire and empower others to share in achieving it.

You will have great ideas and will know how to make them a practical reality.

You will lead the Trust leadership team; taking responsibility for ensuring high standards are achieved by all academies across the MAT. School improvement will be rooted in ensuring benefit to all learners (whatever their starting point) and include both their outcomes and experience. You will be driven to ensure that through working together, outcomes for every single pupil are extraordinary. The objective is to ensure the Trust is one of the highest performers in the country.

Working with the central team and academy leaders, you will have a comprehensive overview of the performance and operations of all of the academies across the Trust; enabling you and your team to deploy resources efficiently and effectively and to intervene early to anticipate problems.

As the Accounting Officer for the Trust you will ensure there are rigorous systems and processes in place to robustly manage resources across the Trust and to secure the financial health and sustainability of each academy working to the standards set out in the Academies Financial Handbook.

As a champion for the good reputation of the Agora Learning Partnership, you will ensure it is focussed on quality, is an exciting, inclusive place to learn, is outward looking and collaborative.

MAIN AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

- Develop the Trust in accordance with the Trust Board's stated aims, objectives and values and ensure the Trust adds value for every child, academy and the wider community
- Uphold the ethos of the Trust to build and maintain strong, collaborative learning partnerships
- Take responsibility for the delivery of the Trust's strategic plans and key documents ensuring alignment with plans for each academy
- In conjunction with the Chief Financial Officer, produce regular financial reports and an annual report on the work of the Trust and its impact on outcomes for pupils including reviewing value for money.
- Ensure robust and appropriate proactive risk mitigation and management for the Trust and that the risk strategy is aligned to local academy risk strategies
- Lead and manage all operations through the agreed organisational structure and through managing the performance and professional development of key leaders, for example headteachers of schools in the Trust.
- Ensure the agreed scheme of delegation is well understood and is applied consistently.
- In conjunction with the Chief Financial Officer, review and approve annual budgets for recommendation to the Board for each of the academies in the Trust
- Create and contribute to a culture of constant improvement and through MSCI (monitoring, support, challenge and intervention), ensure that there are robust quality assurance processes in place to ensure standards remain high and problems are anticipated and avoided at an early stage.
- Ensure there are high quality services targeted at academies causing concern, with clear strategy groups and plans in place for improvement.
- Ensure that there are clear lines of communication across the Trust and with external stakeholders and that key messages are clearly communicated to all as appropriate.
- Ensure all relevant performance data is captured, analysed,

reported and acted on and monitor progress against targets, including meeting all statutory and legislative standards.

- Ensure robust and legal arrangements are in place to forward manage; place planning, asset management including programmes of capital projects, procurement and income generation.
- Ensure staff and pupils are equipped with the technologies that support and transform learning
- Ensure that the Trust meets all legislative and statutory requirements, including health and safety, safeguarding and those required by Companies House, and the Charity Commission, data protection, the Master and Supplementary Funding agreements.
- Secure an exciting and relevant programme of CPD, career pathways and innovative recruitment and retention strategy to attract and retain the best staff possible.
- Ensure the central team contributes to the selection, induction and support for new headteachers and other key leaders
- Develop and maintain effective relationships with key stakeholders (RSC DfE, ESFA, Diocesan leaders, TSAs, HCC, HfL Ltd, headteachers, AGBs) and work closely with partners and stakeholders to maximise resources and contribute to the common good.
- Keep abreast of national and local policy drivers and changes to legislation, ensuring compliance and anticipating what discretionary aspects will be of benefit to academies across the Trust, helping them to remain on the front foot and identify new opportunities to develop services and types of support that will improve standards and support schools to improve.
- Promote a collaborative and outward looking Trust with strong external relationships and where best practice can be shared and harnessed for the good of all children.
- Promote the importance of working with parents and the wider community to maximise the potential of all pupils, inspiring the global citizens of today and the future.
- Promote efficient and effective sharing and deployment of resources and expertise; brokering the most appropriate expertise from internal teams or external partners.
- Create the conditions that support robust mental and physical health for all pupils and staff across the Trust
- Promote equal opportunities in both the way in which all services are delivered and in sound employment practices.

The duties and responsibilities listed above describe the post as it is at present and will be reviewed annually to reflect plans, growth and the development of the Trust. The post holder is expected to accept any reasonable alterations that may from time to time be necessary.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Agora Learning Partnership is committed to ensuring that everyone who applies to work for us receives fair treatment and we positively encourage applications from suitably qualified and eligible candidates regardless of age, disability, race, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, religion or belief, marriage and civil partnership and caring status. We expect all our staff to demonstrate a commitment to advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations.

DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE

This post is subject to full pre-employment checks and is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Please note that additional information referring to the Disclosure and Barring Service is in the guidance notes to the application form. If you are invited to an interview you will receive more information.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

It will be the duty of every employee while at work to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and of other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work.

Person specification

QUALIFICATIONS AND PREVIOUS ROLES

- Degree and or recognised professional qualification relevant to the role
- A record of recent and relevant continuing professional development
- Successful leadership in an educational setting, trust environment or equivalent
- A successful track record of school improvement in a leadership and/or advisory capacity

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

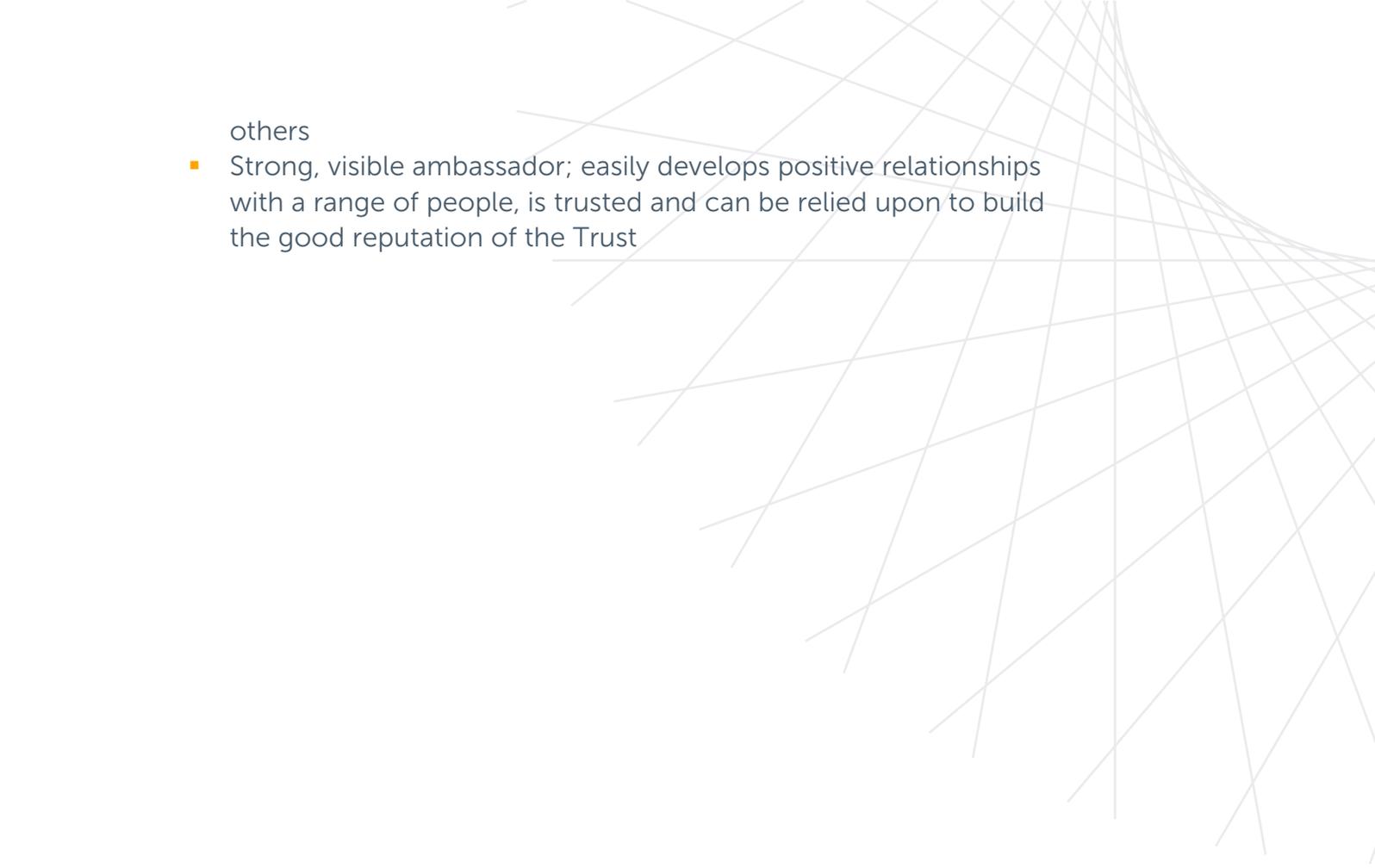
- Knowledge and understanding of current educational policy and statutory framework in which the Trust is operating as well as relevant policies, legislation and codes of practice related to Company and Charity Law
- Deep understanding and experience of analysing pupil performance data
- Knowledge of best practice in school improvement and where to source the best resource
- Understanding of issues facing school leaders and strategies for rapid improvement
- Up-to-date knowledge and understanding of the Ofsted framework
- Understanding of school funding and school budget management
- Sound understanding of key financial drivers including (where possible):
 - requirements in the Academies Financial Handbook
 - understanding of profit and loss, forecasting, how to make a business case for project costing
 - how to manage budgets and meet financial targets
 - how to raise revenue and apply for grants
- Understanding of importance and requirements of audit and risk management
- Sound knowledge of using IT across all aspects of relevant work
- Understanding of the importance of developing effective PR and marketing strategies

Experience of:

- Running a successful school or organisation within the education sector
- Line and performance management of senior members of staff
- Managing large budgets and income generation
- Bringing about effective school improvement and the requirements of successful Ofsted inspections
- Managing an organisation in growth and change and introducing innovation
- Leading and managing challenging conversations with school leaders and governors
- Successful strategic planning, business planning and associated resource management
- Taking responsibility for key pieces of work or contract management
- Liaising with senior officers in other organisations including Ofsted, RSC, DfE
- Presenting to large audiences of senior educationalists
- Overseeing large projects e.g. large-scale asset development/school buildings projects desirable

BEHAVIOURAL COMPETENCIES AND PERSONAL SKILLS

- Ability to think strategically; articulate vision and turn strategy into clear, achievable plans for delivery, keeping a close operational involvement in the early stages of development
- Innovative and entrepreneurial; ability to see the bigger picture, recognise relevant opportunities across the panorama of the landscape and make connections that empower the team to deliver creative solutions
- Self-motivated and disciplined; outcomes and action focussed with a proactive and positive calm approach to problem solving
- Ability to motivate and inspire others; demonstrating a high degree of perception and emotional intelligence
- Versatility; including ability to lead and build teams, as well as flexibly work effectively as part of a leadership team
- Capable of making accurate judgements; able to question, probe, quality assure, analyse and evaluate the quality of practice
- Confident communicator; has skills to communicate with senior leaders across the sector one to one, on a group basis and to large audiences
- Empowering: Strong believer in developing and empowering



others

- Strong, visible ambassador; easily develops positive relationships with a range of people, is trusted and can be relied upon to build the good reputation of the Trust