

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER (CEO)

CANDIDATE PACK



Better Together
LEARNING TRUST



Welcome Letter

Dear Applicant

Thank you for your interest in the position of Chief Executive Officer of Better Together Learning Trust. Our current, highly successful, CEO is retiring at the end of the 2025/26 academic year. So we are looking for an exceptional leader who can drive forward the development of the trust to be a foremost provider of special education. We are investing in our vision and strategy and you can help us to deliver them.

The enclosed Applicant Information Pack contains full details of the position and useful information to inform you about our Trust and the post.

When completing your application please include a summary of your experience addressing all the appropriate essential qualities listed in the person specification.

Visits to the schools are encouraged and these can be arranged by contacting Ross Laird at Academicis via rlaird@academicis.co.uk or 07901 585959.

Yours faithfully

Peter Kelby

Chair

Better Together Learning Trust



About Us

Better Together Learning Trust (BTLT) is a highly successful trust running two special schools and looking to expand the expertise it can provide both internally and externally.

Our drive is to ensure that every student will leave us able to be effective in the world whatever their next step is.

We have a clear vision:

Our vision is that Better Together Learning Trust and its schools will be acknowledged as a leading contributor to high quality inclusive education in their local communities for 4 to 25 year olds.

The current phase of our strategic plan is to develop a Centre of Excellence in the Trust. This will enable us to expand the offerings that we can give to our students and to grow our contribution to other schools struggling with SEND provision. We run an Outreach programme to local secondary schools.

Partnerships and communications with others who can help SEND children are key to our success. One of our goals is to use this to improve the transition from children to adult offerings.

We have a continuing goal of improving our sustainability and are investing in this in both schools.

Our Schools

Our Schools

The schools meet the needs of students who:-

- Have attainments well below the expected range of their peers with additional difficulties that may include physical difficulties, speech and language delay, low self-esteem, sensory impairment and underdeveloped social skills.
- Have significant learning difficulties and attainments.
- Have a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder that requires structured teaching and may require discrete provision. Students will usually be working above the P scale levels.
- Students may have challenging behaviour, but this will not be their primary need. The Trust would not normally meet the needs of students with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) with additional complex needs or those who require complex medical intervention.

Friars, based in Wellingborough, has been a Special school since the late 1990s and has an excellent reputation in the area. Friars school was again judged Outstanding by Ofsted in January 2025.

Our new school, Chelveston Road (next to Higham Ferrers) received an assessment of Good with Outstanding Behaviour and Attitude in October 2023 just two years after opening.



Our Approach

The Better Together Learning Approach

There is a strong belief throughout the Better Together Learning Trust that students will develop and progress as a result of valuing every contribution from its staff, family members and those in the wider community. The student voice is critical to the success of each school and decisions will be informed wherever possible by taking into account the experiences and views of students in whatever form that takes. Each school will develop a curriculum that is challenging and innovative and informed by best available evidence. This will be informed by creating the capacity and willingness to develop all staff to strive for excellence.

Values

Our values are summarised by the statement 'Every child, every chance, every day'. Our actions are underpinned by the belief that;

- Everyone should feel included in their local communities and wider society
- Staff and students are capable of constantly learning and developing
- Family members play a vital role in the education of students
- Our schools need to be part of and responsive to their local communities

Mission

Given these beliefs, all our staff will strive to ensure that;

- Every student feels included in the life of their school
- Every student leaves their school prepared for the next stage in their lives
- Each student feels engaged and is enabled to contribute to the communities in which they live
- Each student's potential is recognised, and their potential is turned into a reality
- Family members are engaged in the students' learning and development
- Investment is made in high quality professional development for staff
- Student and staff achievements are recognised and celebrated

Job Description



JOB TITLE:	Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	ACCOUNTABLE TO:	Board of Trustees
SALARY SCALE:	L35 – L41	RESPONSIBLE FOR:	Chief Finance Officer, Chief Operating Officer, Heads of School, Clerk to the Trust
CONTRACT TYPE:	Full-time, Permanent		

MAIN PURPOSE

The CEO will provide strategic leadership and direction to Better Together Learning Trust, ensuring the highest possible standards of education, financial sustainability, and operational excellence across all schools in the trust. The CEO will be accountable to the Trust Board and will drive a culture of continuous improvement, fostering collaboration and innovation.

The CEO will proactively promote and model the values, vision and mission of the trust within the organisation and to partners, communities and other stakeholders outside the organisation.

The CEO will be accountable to the trust board for:

- Providing strong strategic leadership towards the trust's vision and goals
- The performance of all schools within the trust
- The safeguarding of children and young people across the trust
- Leading and overseeing the efficient, effective and compliant management of the trust and its schools

The CEO is also the trust's accounting officer, responsible for:

- Ensuring the trust fulfils the statutory and regulatory responsibilities set out in the Academy Trust Handbook
- Ensuring the responsible and appropriate use of public funds
- Planning, implementing and monitoring the trust's internal and external financial reporting

The CEO's key leadership and management responsibilities are:

- Strategic leadership of the Trust including development of the Centre of Excellence
- Leadership of the Outreach Programme with the LA (part of the Centre of Excellence)
- Leadership and development of Teaching and Learning

Job Description



QUALITIES

The CEO will:

- Uphold public trust in trust leadership and maintain high standards of ethics, behaviour and professional conduct, by modelling the Nolan Principles
- Build positive and respectful relationships across the trust and its wider community
- Promote the qualities, principles and successes of the trust both within and beyond the education sector
- Serve in the best interests of the trust's students

The duties and responsibilities listed below are indicative of the tasks that the CEO will perform and are not intended to be an exhaustive list. The post holder will be expected to take on additional responsibility if appropriate to the role as they arrive.

Strategic leadership and development of the trust

The CEO will be accountable for providing strategic leadership and direction for the trust and its schools towards the vision and aims set by the trust board, in line with the trust's values.

The CEO will:

- Develop and grow the Centre of Excellence as the key strategic goal. This includes a contract with the Local Authority to provide support for SEND to mainstream schools.
- Support the trust board in the formulation, development and implementation of its strategy, including taking responsibility for key documents such as the business plan, long-term strategic plan, and self-evaluation and improvement plans

- Develop and maintain effective relationships with key partners and stakeholders including the regional director, the Department for Education (DfE), the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), local authorities, the wider local community and other local schools and trusts
- Work with the trust board and other senior leaders to ensure proactive, robust and appropriate risk management for the trust and its schools
- Maintain an outward-facing role on behalf of the trust and its schools to support future growth and development
- Work collaboratively with other trust leaders, to promote best practice and provide support where necessary

Leadership and management

The CEO will be accountable for the management of all trust operations, both directly and through the management of the agreed organisational structure.

The CEO will:

- Provide dynamic, motivational and inspirational leadership at all levels of the organisation
- Model the trust's commitment to continuous improvement and high achievement across all areas of its work
- Lead and develop the Central Team.
- Develop, implement and review trust-level policies to ensure the achievement of the trust's aims
- Ensure the trust's management and organisational structures and operational models are fit for purpose, and facilitate continuous improvement

Job Description



- Review and lead the growth and development of the trust considering the trust vision and values and ensure effective communication with stakeholders ensuring that the education and interests of our students are at the centre of everything we do.
- Strengthen community links through effective communication, responding to local needs, promoting the trust, and engaging with all key stakeholders. Consider the 19-25 development and impact across the trust, develop and effectively manage the trust's resources and facilities, including overseeing major capital projects.
- Enhance networking and business development through strategic partners to ensure that the trust is a leading hub for Special Education within the area.
- Ensure the trust effectively manages its talent through appropriate and effective CPD and succession planning, including developing and empowering senior staff, appointing consultants where appropriate, and supporting recruitment and CPD at trust-level and cascading to all schools within the trust.
- Take responsibility for guiding the trust through changes to education sector initiatives and practice, such as curriculum changes or changes to Ofsted and accountability frameworks
- Responsibility for the development of Teaching and Learning across the Trust.
- Ensure effective leadership and management of all schools within the trust through strategic support, challenge, and development of Heads of School.
- Oversight of the trust by ensuring that the schools are compliant in terms of statutory and legal obligations, such as educational requirements, safeguarding, and health & safety by ensuring policies, systems and processes are integrated, consistent and working effectively.

- Secure accountability by monitoring, evaluating, and reviewing school practices and promoting improvement strategies across the whole trust.
- With the support of the CFO lead on strategic financial planning to ensure the equitable deployment of budgets and resources, in the best interests of student outcomes and sustainability of the trust.

Quality of education and student outcomes

The CEO will be accountable for all aspects of teaching and learning across the trust, upholding high standards for academic and non-academic student outcomes and ensuring achievement of the trust's educational vision.

The CEO will:

- Develop and lead the trust's improvement processes, including identifying and analysing academy improvement needs, prioritising appropriately resourced solutions and evaluating the impact of improvement strategies
- Provide quality assurance and accountability through a rigorous and robust system of target setting
- Quality assures teaching and learning by embedding creative, responsive, and effective approaches to teaching and learning. Enable effective curriculum delivery through appropriate sharing of teaching expertise and working in collaboration with others across the trust.
- Provide strategic direction and leadership for teaching and learning across the trust, especially in response to sector changes or changes to government policy
- Commission external support for trust and schools improvement, and assess the effectiveness and impact of the support provided
- Ensure that students are equipped to be successful in the world after school

Job Description

Safeguarding and compliance

The CEO will be accountable for the trust, and its schools, meeting its legal and statutory responsibilities.

The CEO will:

- Ensure that the trust, and each school within the trust, meets its safeguarding responsibilities in line with current legislation
- Ensure that the trust meets requirements related to health and safety and data protection
- Ensure the trust meets requirements set out by Companies House, the Charity Commission, the DfE and the ESFA
- Embed trust-wide accountability and quality assurance procedures to achieve compliance

Finance and procurement

The CEO will be accountable for the financial propriety and sustainability of the trust.

The CEO will:

- Act as accounting officer for the trust, ensuring that it works to the standards set out in the Academy Trust Handbook

- Work closely with the CFO to establish and oversee effective financial monitoring systems, take appropriate action to address financial risks, problems and irregularities, and present trustees with accurate and timely financial reports
- Develop and oversee the trust's income generation strategies, including grant applications and other fundraising
- Oversee resource allocation and budget-setting and approval for the trust and its schools, and ensure budgetary targets are met
- Work closely with the CFO and COO to establish effective procurement procedures to achieve financial efficiencies
- Working with key partners, including the trust's auditors or accountants

The CEO is expected to comply with any reasonable request from the Board of Trustees to undertake work of a similar level that is not specified in this job description. Employees are expected to be courteous to colleagues and provide a welcoming environment to visitors and telephone callers.

Better Together Learning Trust will endeavour to make any necessary reasonable adjustments to the job and the working environment to enable access to employment opportunities for disabled job applicants or continued employment for any employee who develops a disabling condition.



Person Specification

CRITERIA	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
Qualifications		
Degree level qualification or equivalent	•	
Evidence of continuing professional development	•	
Post graduation qualification in education, leadership or management		•
NPQ (National Professional Qualification)		•
Experience		
Senior leadership experience within an educational setting (e.g. Headteacher / Executive Head / Trust Lead)	•	
Experience of leading and managing change	•	
Experience in school improvement, particularly for students with SEND	•	
Financial management and budgetary responsibility at a senior level	•	
Previous experience as CEO or executive leader in a MAT, preferably in special education		•
Experience, as a leader, of an Ofsted inspection and subsequent actions		•
Experience of working with a board of trustees/governors		•
Experience with external partners (LAs, agencies, other trusts)		•
Experience with capital project management and estates development		•
Knowledge and Understanding		
Understanding of SEND statutory requirements, including the SEND Code of Practice	•	
Knowledge of current educational policy	•	
Strong safeguarding knowledge	•	
Understanding of effective governance and compliance	•	
Understanding of HR, risk management, and legal issues in MATs		•
Knowledge of marketing, communications, and stakeholder engagement		•

Person Specification

CRITERIA	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
Skills and Abilities		
Inspirational leadership; able to articulate and model the trust's vision and values	•	
Ability to build and maintain high-performing teams	•	
Excellent communication, negotiation, and interpersonal skills	•	
Ability to analyse and interpret complex data for strategic planning	•	
Ability to establish positive relationships with a range of stakeholders	•	
Competent in the use of IT	•	
Change management and project leadership skills		•
Experience with unions/staff bodies		•
Mentoring/coaching other leaders		•
Personal Attributes		
Passion for improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND	•	
High Standards of integrity, transparency and professionalism	•	
Resilience, adaptability and a solution focused approach	•	
Commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion	•	
Strategic thinker, committed to continuous improvement	•	
Emotional intelligence and approachability	•	



How to Apply

If you wish to discover more about this exciting opportunity, need any further information or would like to have an informal discussion, please contact Ross Laird at Academicis, our recruitment partner, on rlaird@academicis.co.uk or by phone on 07901 585959 / 01223 907979.

CLOSING DATE:

Monday 20th October 2025

SHORTLISTING:

Monday 20th October 2025

INTERVIEWS:

4th and 5th November 2025



Friars Academy
Friars Close,
Wellingborough,
Northamptonshire,
NN8 2LA