



# Are you ready for BMAT?

An introduction to who we  
are and what we stand for

Supporting primary and secondary schools across Essex and East London, BMAT is a growing multi-academy trust with a singular vision...

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- Schools,  
teachers and  
pupils freed  
to succeed.**
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# The BMAT Story

**I never set about to start a Multi-Academy Trust. That simply wasn't the plan – at least not at first.**

The journey towards that end began back in 2010 at Burnt Mill Academy in Harlow. At that time, this was a secondary school in dire straits, with just 27 per cent of students achieved five or more A\* – C grades for GCSE.

To put it bluntly, it was a failing school.

When I arrived in the Summer of 2010, I knew that turning the school around would depend more than anything else on this: having excellent teachers motivated by what their children could achieve.

With that vision and focus in our minds, we went about reversing the fortunes of the school and its students. Within a year, the GCSE results leapt to 55 per cent of students securing five or more A\* – C grades – the best results in Harlow. By the time Ofsted visited in 2012, inspectors were genuinely wowed and we received an upgrade from Satisfactory to Outstanding.

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Inspired by what we were seeing our students achieve – and with the gentle nudging of the Department for Education – we decided to embark on a mission to build a MAT for schools in need of a turnaround in the local area.

We quickly welcomed four Harlow-based primary schools – Freshwaters Primary Academy, Cooks Spinney Primary Academy & Nursery, Roydon Primary Academy and Little Parndon Primary Academy – into the family.

Above all, we remain committed to our core purpose: to lift the ceiling off our children and inspiring them to discover new possibilities.

Regardless of the next chapter of our story, that heartbeat will remain the same.

**Helena Mills CBE**  
CEO of BMAT

# We are BMAT

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At BMAT, we believe in freedom.  
In lifting the ceiling off our children.  
In letting our teachers truly teach.  
In letting our schools express who they are.

To be part of BMAT is to be part of something bigger.

It means joining with a multi-site team of talented teachers and support staff.  
It means courageously and generously exercising your gifts.

Above all, it means sharing a common vision of what we are building: a place where teachers and children are freed to succeed.

**Are you ready to be part of BMAT?**





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To work together to  
smash through the barriers  
that prevent our children  
from becoming confident,  
high achieving and  
independent individuals.

BMAT Mission

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# The BMAT Vision and Values

## **Our Vision**

To run a community of schools which provide an outstanding education for every individual attending a Trust school.

Our schools will be places of aspiration, where individuals matter and confidence flourishes so that achievement for all is outstanding.

## **Our Values**

### **Courageous actions**

We are courageous enough to make the tough decision, to do what's right, even if it's not what's popular.

### **High expectations**

We are unswerving in expecting excellence of our teachers and more of our children – be that for behaviours, relational skills or academic results.


### **Servant leadership**



We treat each other as peers, not superiors, and choose to adopt a leadership style that asks: 'How can I help?'









# The BMAT Structure

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BMAT is comprised of 11 schools across Essex and East London, broken into three distinct hubs:

| East London Hub   |  |
|---|--|
|  | <b>Royal Docks Academy (Secondary)</b><br><br><b>Mr John Blaney</b><br>Executive Headteacher |

| North Essex Hub   |   |
|---|---|
|   | <b>Forest Hall School (Secondary)</b><br><br><b>Mr S Hehir</b><br>Executive Headteacher<br><br><b>Mrs H Jones</b><br>Head Of School |
|  | <b>Magna Carta Academy (Primary)</b><br><br><b>Mr M Solomonides</b><br>Headteacher  |

| West Essex Hub  |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
|    | <b>Burnt Mill Academy (Secondary)</b><br><br><b>Ms L McGlashan</b><br>Head Of School  |    | <b>Freshwaters Academy (Primary)</b><br><br><b>Mrs S Laing</b><br>Executive Headteacher<br><br><b>Ms A Dias</b><br>Head Of School      |
|    | <b>Cooks Spinney Academy (Primary)</b><br><br><b>Mr S Pope</b><br>Executive Headteacher<br><br><b>Mr N Stirrat</b><br>Head Of School                            |    | <b>Little Parndon Academy (Primary)</b><br><br><b>Mrs S Laing</b><br>Executive Headteacher<br><br><b>Mrs K Clark</b><br>Head Of School |
|  | <b>Epping St John's School (Secondary)</b><br><br><b>Mr S Hehir</b><br>Executive Headteacher<br><br><b>Ms J Daniels and Mrs E Ruffles</b><br>Co-Heads Of School |  | <b>Roydon Academy (Primary)</b><br><br><b>Mr S Pope</b><br>Executive Headteacher<br><br><b>Mr M Clark</b><br>Head Of School            |
|  | <b>Sir Frederick Gibberd College (Secondary)</b><br><br><b>Mrs D Conlon</b><br>Head Of School   |  | <b>BMAT STEM Academy (Secondary)</b><br><br><b>Mrs L Tooley</b><br>Head Of School  |



# The BMAT Way

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Here at BMAT, we have a way of doing things – a culture, an approach that runs through the Trust and which marks each of our schools as ‘BMAT schools’.

## **No limits attitude to children**

We believe that no child should be limited by where they’ve come from; that every child within the BMAT family deserves the chance to move on from where they are now to somewhere better. This belief – this attitude – is a non-negotiable for us here at BMAT.

## **Letting our teachers truly teach**

We believe in letting our teachers do what they’re best at – teach. Our experience is that a strict scheme of works and carbon copy approach doesn’t work. Why? Because, ultimately,



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A photograph of two young women playing basketball outdoors. The woman on the left is in the foreground, wearing a dark blue and white basketball jersey, holding a basketball with both hands above her head. She is looking up at the ball. The woman on the right is slightly behind her, also wearing a dark blue and white basketball jersey, with her arms raised in a defensive stance. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with trees and a clear sky. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent teal color.

instinctive teaching is the kind of teaching that will inspire a child to see and discover new possibilities.

### **Local schools with local personalities**

We are not in the business of making every school in our network look like each other. In fact, we celebrate the personality and character of each school that joins our network. Local schools by nature have local personalities – and we aren't afraid of that.

### **A close network of accessible peers**

Joining the Trust or a local BMAT school means being part of something bigger than a single entity. It means being part of a network of peers; a large team of people within close proximity of each other, each of whom stands ready to share their expertise and provide support in times of need.

# The BMAT Promise

**So what can BMAT offer you, an aspiring teacher or professional looking to develop their career within the education sector?**

Of course there is the 'package' – salary, annual leave, pension contributions, term-time working, childcare vouchers, etc. But the heart of what we offer our employees is not a set of terms and conditions. It is a bold promise – with five clear strands:

## **Participate in a vision**

Regardless of role or location, every employee at BMAT is compelled by a common vision: to lift the ceiling off our children and inspiring them to discover new possibilities. We offer the passion and energy that this shared belief in what is possible brings.

## **Delight in success**

BMAT is currently the top performing Trust in the UK for Primary outcomes. We have an exceptional record of teaching and academic results, often in the midst of challenging local circumstances. Come and taste success, and delight in what that means for our children.







### **Pursue new opportunities**

We are courageous promoters here at BMAT. If we see potential – and there is an opportunity – we won't hesitate to move the right people into the right positions of responsibility, and quickly. Our network of schools in close proximity, along with our acclaimed teaching school, offers the perfect seedbed for personal and professional development.

### **Contribute to a peer network**

Unlike many growing Multi-Academy Trusts, BMAT is marked by the clear geographical proximity of its schools, a feature that allows for collaboration and relationship of the kind few MATs can offer.

At BMAT, we share what we have with each other – whether experience, specialist teachers, or specialist resources. It is simply part of our DNA; the way things are done around here.

### **Build your career**

We are still a relatively young Multi-Academy Trust having begun our journey as recently as 2013. This means new schools, growing schools, new staff – in short, we are a Trust on the move and are always looking for talented, committed people to help us forge the path ahead. Come build your career by helping us build our network of schools.

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I'm passionate about giving people opportunities when they come to BMAT. My vision is that this is a place where people can fulfil their dream of helping children be all that they can be, whilst at the same time experiencing success for themselves.

Helena Mills, CEO

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# The BMAT People

Our success, our ethos, our opportunities have each been moved forward by individuals who have committed to making a difference within the Trust and the schools we are comprised of. Here are just a few of them...

**Name** Jennifer Taylor

**Joined** 2014

**Current role** Head of Science,  
Burnt Mill Academy

I was originally employed as an unqualified teacher. When we became part of BMAT, it really paved the way for people – myself included – to progress their careers. We've also really benefited from the culture of professional development we have, which I think is quite unique.

There's also a really good sharing culture here. We share staff, we share resources, we share equipment. There's a real sense that you don't have to struggle by yourself.

**Name** Rikky Patel

**Joined** 2018

**Current role** Group Management  
Accountant, BMAT

I'd never worked in education but when I came for interview, Mike Ford (Financial Controller) did a great job of selling BMAT. It seemed like somewhere I could push myself, achieve personal life goals. I could see myself growing with the Trust, as the Trust continues to grow.

I felt very welcomed from the start. Everyone is very friendly – it's a tight-knit community and really open environment. Even teachers regularly end up popping in for a chat! I also like that no idea is a bad idea. You don't always get that where you work...



# The BMAT People

**Name** Luke Wildig

**Joined** 2012

**Current role** Assistant Headteacher,  
Cooks Spinney Primary Academy

It's all happened extremely fast for me. I joined as an unqualified teaching assistant and within 5 years found myself as an Assistant Head! The Trust is really good at spotting people who will work hard and have potential early on. My story really isn't that unusual within BMAT.

What I really like about BMAT is that all the schools are close together. It gives a sense of family and community, and allows other schools to really support each other – which is fantastic. I honestly don't think you'll find these sorts of opportunities and support somewhere else that you will get here. It's very rare...

**Name** Cristin Casey

**Joined** 2012

**Current role** Director of Performing  
Arts (across BMAT Schools)

I decided to come back to Burnt Mill Academy in 2012 after a stint of teaching practice two years earlier. It was the best thing I ever did for my career. Every year since I've received a new line of responsibility or qualification. Working across the Trust, the opportunities and support to push I've received have been amazing.

Being part of BMAT means being able to give students high quality experiences that wouldn't otherwise be available to them. As a teacher, you don't have to be a jack of all trades to deliver that – you just need to know who to draw upon.





**BMAT STEM Academy**

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BMAT is a company limited by guarantee. Company No. 07843166

## JOB DESCRIPTION

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| <b>POSITION:</b>        | Trust Finance Cluster Lead                                       |
| <b>REPORTS TO:</b>      | Central Finance; Trust Finance Manager / Financial Controller    |
| <b>RESPONSIBLE FOR:</b> | Senior Finance Officers and Finance Assistants                   |
| <b>PAYSCALE:</b>        | Band 6, Points 43 - 47 plus fringe allowance (£39,077 - £42,807) |
| <b>LOCATION</b>         | Designated Academies (across Essex) and Head Office (Harlow)     |
| <b>CONTRACT:</b>        | Full time, 37 hours per week, 52 weeks per year<br>Permanent     |

### PURPOSE OF THE JOB

- To provide finance leadership, support and guidance to local finance teams, Exec/Head Teachers and Academy Leadership Teams, with the development and management of Academies budgets.
- To present budgets and financial monitoring returns to the central finance team
- Seek to maximise grant funding from the Education Skills and Funding Agency and local authorities and interpret local authority and academy finance as appropriate
- To pursue cost effective and shared resources, including develop and implementation of local objectives, systems, processes relating to Finance and best value for money.
- To present clear and concise financial information both verbally and in written form and ensure that academies are in compliance with group policy, the Academy Finance Handbook, management and audit reports, scheme of delegation and other finance policies and procedures.
- To provide Academy finance monitoring, audit workbooks and internal control to enable a consistent approach to information required by Head Office, internal and external auditors.
- To maintain financial oversight of other core Academy operational functions; HR, Premises, ICT and other support functions as appropriate. Reliance on key individuals at each Academy who manage these functions day to day.
- **Liaison with:**
- Trust Finance Staff, Senior Finance Officers, Finance Assistants, Executive Heads, Academy Budget Holders and auditors.



## **KEY RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACCOUNTABILITIES**

This list is not exhaustive, but includes:

### **Specific Responsibilities**

#### **Support to existing academies:**

- Review and provide financial support to the finance staff in the cluster, ensuring monthly accounts, forecast outturn and reports are accurate and timely.
- Review all internal control documents and workbooks to ensure they are complete and accurately reflect the control environment.
- Offer systems and accounting support to BMAT Academies in the local area/cluster identifying and implementing region synergies in consultation with the Central Finance Team
- Contribute to the strategic direction of BMAT Academies and assist Academy Executive Heads to develop financial plans, taking into account the ESFA and relevant government guidelines and other sources of information including the parameters set by BMAT.
- Support Academies with the preparation of the monthly management accounts, forecasts, internal control checklists, audit work books and other financial and non-financial reports. Explain all significant variances and compliance issues to all relevant stakeholders, in accordance with agreed timetables.
- Assist with the development and implementation of robust systems to manage budgets, supporting the Trust and Executive Heads to ensure that spending remains within agreed limits.
- Ensure that Academies are compliant with group policies, account processing and reconciliations are performed as directed by BMAT.
- Optimise the benefit to the Academies of funding from grants and other sources, by identifying funding opportunities, ensuring that opportunities are utilised, ensuring that out of hours use of grounds and premises is maximised to generate income, drafting funding bids, interpreting criteria and advising colleagues within the Academies to ensure that funding is used appropriately.
- Identify and develop strategies for the area/cluster that will benefit and contribute to the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the Academies, such as exploring synergies and opportunities for partnership working, shared services and resources and value for money.
- Support and manage academies external audit data collection requirements and internal audit / responsible officer visits and reporting, answering all queries in a timely manner, and supporting suggested improvements.
- Taking a lead in key financial projects and improvement Initiatives.
- To have responsibility for the management of key finance personnel within the designated Academies, in conjunction with the Executive Heads
- Working flexibly across the designated academies, building good working relationships with Head Office, Academy finance staff and Executive Heads. Investigating better ways of working and introducing measures to improve systems and achieve economies of scale where possible.

## **New Academies responsibilities**

- To assist in the preparation of budgets for new BMAT Academies within the area, if appropriate
- To ensure all financial aspects of opening new academies are completed including ensuring appropriate contracts are transitioned / signed up for, setting up BMAT systems, and completing other financial aspects relating to opening a new academy
- Providing post-opening support to new academies, ensuring accounts, forecasts and reports are accurate and timely. This will also include reviewing all internal control documents to ensure they are complete and accurately reflect the control environment of the academy.

## **General Administration**

- Filing and Electronic Filing and maintaining of office records and responsible for archiving.
- Such other duties of an administrative nature as may be required by the Trust Finance Staff.
- Any reasonable request made by the Senior Finance Officer/Cluster Lead and Central Finance Staff.
- All staff have a responsibility for the safeguarding and promotion of well-being of all pupils.
- Health and physical capacity for the post.

## **General**

- To participate in the performance and development review process, taking personal responsibility for identification of learning, development and training opportunities in discussion with line manager.
- The Trust is able to support staff where there are opportunities for development. This may be in the form of assisting towards the cost of the qualification i.e. AAT
- This post is based across Academies in Essex and Head Office at Harlow as appropriate.

The duties above are neither exclusive nor exhaustive and the post-holder may be required by the Trust Finance Staff to carry out appropriate duties within the context of the job, skills and grade.

## **General responsibilities common to all members of staff**

- All staff are responsible for the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils and must follow BMAT guidance and policies.
- Burnt Mill Academy Trust Directors are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all staff and volunteers to share in this commitment.

This job description will be reviewed annually and may be subject to amendment or modification at any time after consultation with the post-holder.

| Person Specification – Trust Finance Cluster Lead |  |  |           |
|---|--|--|-----------|
|   |  | Essential  | Desirable |
| <b>Qualifications and documentation</b>           | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhanced DBS and validated references</li> <li>Eligibility to work in the UK</li> <li>AAT or CSBM qualification</li> <li>Educated to GCSE Level or equivalent</li> <li>Evidence of CPD and a willingness to undertake further development and further accountancy qualifications, ACCA, CIMA, CIPFA</li> <li>Full Driving licence – ability to be mobile</li> </ol>   | X<br>X<br>X<br>X<br><br>X  | X         |
| <b>Experience</b>                                 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Three Years experience of working in a senior, finance and business partnering level within an organisation</li> <li>Three Years experience of working with Computerised Accounting (PS Financials is desirable), Budget Modelling Systems, MS Office Packages, particularly Excel and Word</li> <li>Experience of being self-motivated and being able to work on own initiative</li> <li>Experience of prioritisation of workload to meet demands</li> <li>Academy and or School Finance Management Experience</li> </ol>  | X<br>X<br>X<br>X   | X         |
| <b>Knowledge Skills / Competencies</b>            | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extensive understanding of accounting processes and procedures</li> <li>High level of competence in Excel, Word and computerised accounting software</li> <li>The ability to make decisions, identify and solve problems based through analysis and sound judgement</li> <li>Able to analyse and use data</li> <li>Well-developed communication, written and oral skills</li> <li>Strong organisational skills and the ability to work well under pressure, plan and manage time effectively</li> <li>Able to work in a busy office environment that often demands high levels of concentration</li> <li>Personal resilience and the ability to maintain morale at times of pressure and change</li> <li>The ability to think outside the box to stimulate innovation</li> <li>Possess integrity, personal credibility and gravitas which inspire commitment, enthusiasm and confident</li> <li>A willingness to personally embrace and celebrate the ethos and values of the organisation</li> </ol> | X<br>X<br>X<br>X<br>X<br>X<br>X<br>X<br>X<br>X<br>X                |           |
| <b>Personal Qualities</b>                         | <b>Characterised as:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work effectively as part of a team</li> <li>Work calmly under pressure</li> <li>Subject to interruption and conflicting demands</li> <li>Effective time management</li> <li>To be flexible</li> <li>Follow instructions accurately</li> <li>Ability to prioritise work effectively</li> <li>Meeting deadlines imposed internally</li> <li>Use own initiative and work independently</li> <li>Accuracy and attention to detail</li> <li>Communicate effectively with adults and children, verbally and in writing</li> <li>Have high expectations of self</li> <li>Committed to personal and professional development</li> <li>Awareness of, and commitment to, equalities issues</li> </ol>  | X<br>X<br>X<br>X<br>X<br>X<br>X<br>X<br>X<br>X<br>X<br>X<br>X<br>X |           |