

WE'RE MAKING A DIFFERENCE CAN YOU?

Appointment of
Assistant Principal
Research and Development

- 7 vacancies in Bradford / Leeds / Liverpool / Manchester



OUR MISSION IS
TO CHALLENGE
EDUCATIONAL
AND SOCIAL
DISADVANTAGE
IN THE NORTH



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Thank you for your interest in joining the Dixons Academies Trust. We are at a crucial stage in our development, and in our mission to challenge educational and social disadvantage in the North. We now plan to embed and refine our successes in inner-city Leeds and Bradford, and to extend our reach to Manchester and Liverpool.

We are currently twelve academies: a converter CTC, five new school start-ups and six sponsorships; one sixth form, six secondary, two all-through, and three primary. Our three Inadequate predecessor schools are now graded Good by Ofsted, five academies are graded Outstanding, and four await their first inspection.

We placed second in the last published KS4 MAT league tables in 2018. The performance of disadvantaged students at Dixons is much closer to and sometimes exceeds that of our other students, and exceeds that of other students nationally. Our primary academies have great strengths but previous outcomes are, as yet, less impressive overall.

Our values define our behaviour. We value hard work: we set ourselves ambitious targets, and know we can meet them only through the exceptional effort and talent of our highly professional staff. We act with integrity: our curriculum focuses on the EBacc, for example, because only high-value qualifications will genuinely transform the life chances of our students. We value teamwork: our curriculum is led by, collaborated on and delivered by high-quality subject specialists, working in cross-cutting teams to create the richest narrative possible for their pupils.

Your role will be to lead decision-making, ensuring that students in all of our academies encounter and retain the most powerful knowledge, and that any new sponsored academy has properly thought-through and sequenced schemes of work immediately available and here to them.

As an excellent classroom practitioner in your own right, you will also make a valuable contribution to our Teaching Institute. You will feel comfortable working with our Principals and the Trust Executive team, and have ambitions one day to lead a school yourself.

Currently, our plan is to bring seven new APs into the team: with English, Mathematics and Science posts to be based in Liverpool or Manchester; a further Science post to be based in Bradford or Leeds and MFL, History and Geography posts which could be based in either Yorkshire or the Northwest depending on the candidate's preference. This really is an exciting moment to join the team.

Sir Nick Weller

Chief Executive



ABOUT DIXONS ACADEMIES TRUST

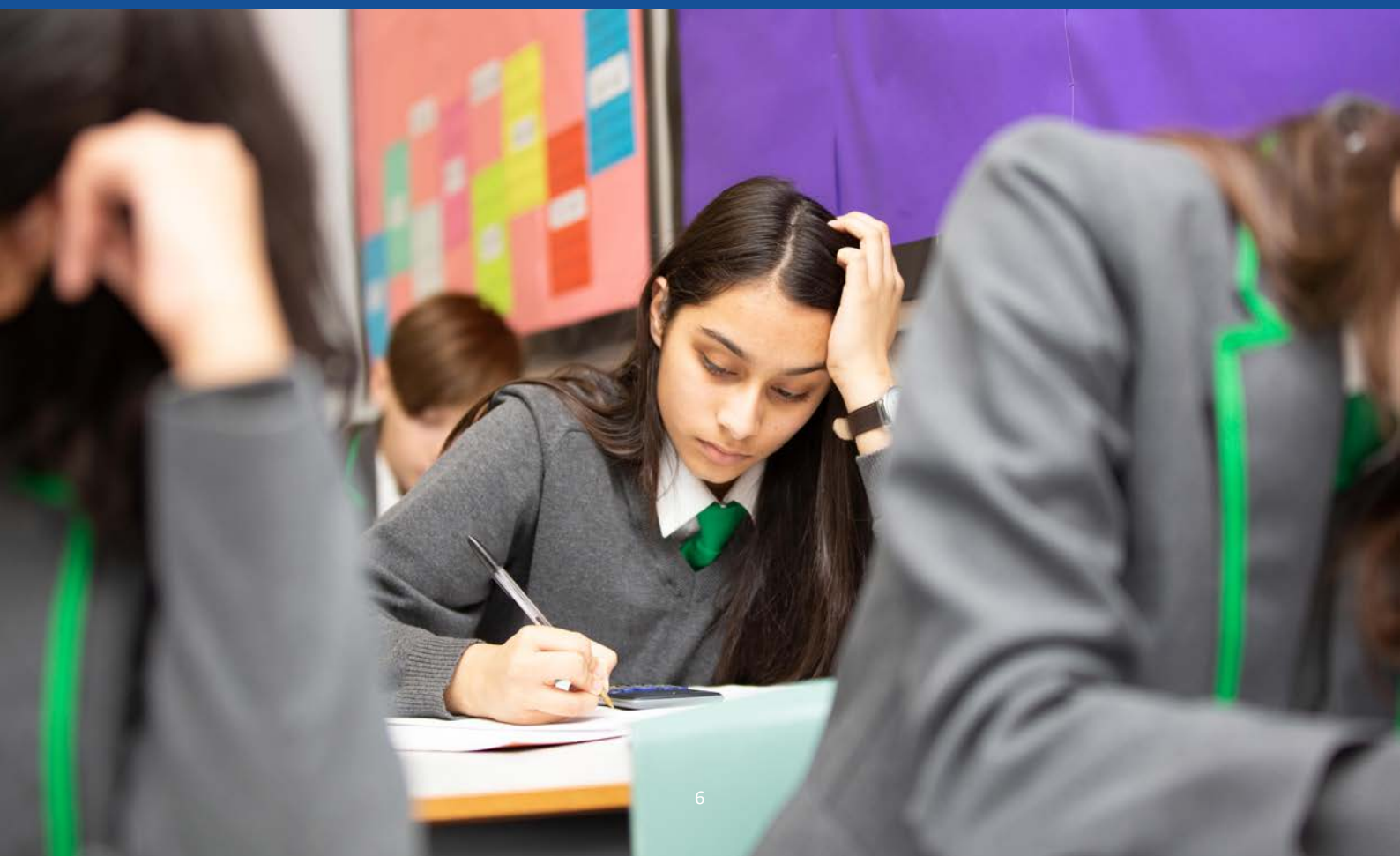
Dixons Academies is a well-established Trust with a strong reputation of delivering high-quality education in its twelve schools, currently serving the communities of Bradford and Leeds. Its mission is to challenge educational and social disadvantage in the North; all of its academies serve areas of deprivation and communities with higher levels of students eligible for Free School Meals or with Special Educational Needs than the national average.

Dixons was built around the high-performing Dixons City Academy. It was one of the first City Technology Colleges, which were the early blueprint for the academy programme. The Trust has also developed brand new schools through the free school programme and turned around failing schools in special measures. Over the past five years, the Trust has doubled in size, growing to serve 10,000 students, supported by 1,000 staff, and with a budget of almost £60m.

The high-calibre, ambitious leadership team, led by Sir Nick Weller, has a proven track record of successfully running and turning around schools. The Trust has been the second highest performing in the country in the secondary phase for the past three years.

Over the next five years, Dixons again plans to double in size to serve over 20,000 students, adding hubs in Liverpool and Manchester. Two schools have already been identified to join the Trust: Fazakerley High School and Broadgreen International School. As it looks to expand, Dixons remains focussed on its strategic anchors of academic rigour and the high-quality delivery of a rich curriculum, a model of aligned autonomy across its academies, and the attraction and retention of talented teachers to support its mission of tackling educational and social disadvantage.

Click here to find out more about Dixons, at our [OpenSource](#) channel.





FOUR CRITICAL QUESTIONS

Why do we exist?

Our Trust's mission is to challenge educational and social disadvantage in the North. All of our academies serve areas of deprivation and communities with higher levels of Free School Meals than the national average. By the age of 18 we want every student to have the choice of university or a high quality apprenticeship.

How do we behave?

We are a values-driven organisation, and our academies are communities with a strong sense of moral purpose. We expect staff and students to work hard: to be determined to get things done. We expect everyone to be good: to behave with integrity and honesty at all times. And we expect all of our people to be nice: to show humility and to be a positive team player.

What do we do?

We establish high-performing non-faith Academies which maximise attainment, value diversity, develop character and build cultural capital. We are ambitious and make no excuses based on our students' backgrounds. All students are expected to make outstanding progress that will enable them to succeed in further or higher education and in the world of work. We spend more on teaching than other Trusts, and cut cost elsewhere. The extended school week offers students more time in the classroom, as well as more opportunities to broaden their horizons and engage in a wider range of co-curricular experiences. We see diversity as a strength, and want all students to value and to learn from the diversity around them.

How will we succeed?

The first of our strategic anchors is academic rigour because we believe that children need powerful knowledge to understand and interpret the world: without it they remain dependent upon those who have it. Powerful knowledge is cognitively superior to that needed for daily life, transcending and liberating students from their daily experience. Our curriculum is designed to be remembered, and is led by, collaborated on, and delivered by high-quality subject specialists. It is owned by students from all faiths and backgrounds and is the entitlement of all: we resist parental opt-outs.

Our operational model is one of aligned autonomy across our academies. We are aligned because we all share the same mission and values; because we want all Dixons students and staff to benefit from our best collective practice; because we all benefit from the collective Dixons resources, brand and reputation; because central services become simpler to deliver and more efficient; and because growth can be better controlled, supported and managed. We value autonomy because leadership and personal accountability are founded on ownership and self-direction; because conformity kills innovation and drives away the best staff; and because standardisation fails to respond to changing needs, and fails to adapt to a changing environment. Therefore, we seek to find the optimal balance between consistency across our academies and self-determination by their leaders.

Talent is the third of our strategic anchors and also one strand of our strategic plan. There is a pressing business-need to ensure that our people-brand is as attractive as our educational brand. Our sector particularly has an issue of recruitment and retention and although we fair better than many other Trusts, despite our location, it is vital that we recognise that we must recruit, retain and motivate talent in order to continue to challenge educational and social disadvantage. Culture may eat strategy for breakfast; talent, however, is king!

ROLE SPECIFICATION

The Assistant Principal's responsibilities include:

- Live the mission and values every day.
- Undertake up to a 50% teaching timetable in your specialism in an identified Dixons academy.
- Implement and model strategies that secure high standards of teaching, student behaviour and attendance.
- Strategically lead decision-making and ensure all subject leads are consulted and valued in order to create a shared Trust vision for your specialist subject.
- Build an effective subject cross-cutting team, showing respect for the expertise and experience of others.
- Lead the cross-cutting team to debate and identify the powerful knowledge critical to your subject.
- At each curriculum phase, design a curriculum with the optimum knowledge sequence for building a secure schema; thereby creating a rich narrative for our students.
- Treat cross-cutting team members with equity and be proactive in supporting all team members regardless of their need.
- Take time to listen to the views of team members and demonstrate sensitivity and diplomacy at all times.
- Offer subject support and advice to academies in challenging circumstances, re-deploying resource where practical.
- Share the most relevant and pertinent educational research and thinking in your subject.
- In dialogue with the Executive Directors, produce and organise all aspects of a Dixons curriculum in your subject.
- Create or identify accompanying 'knowledge organisers' and resources designed to aid long term retention.
- Ensure end of year common assessments are written in line with our assessment principles and are fit for purpose, liaising with any external providers as appropriate.
- Work with the Executive Team and Teaching Institute to continually evaluate the quality of the curriculum in your subject across the Trust.
- Plan and deliver subject specific CPD for specialists across the Trust.
- Support and contribute to Trust-wide school improvement strategies and initiatives.
- Manage own workload and, where necessary, that of others.



A photograph taken from behind a person wearing a maroon hoodie. The hoodie has the words "NO EXCUSES" printed in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters across the back. The person is in a classroom or lecture hall, with other students and a purple wall visible in the blurred background.

NO EXCUSES

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Dixons seeks exceptional individuals to challenge educational and social disadvantage by working with the Executive and other senior leaders to lead a healthy Trust in order to achieve the highest possible standards and prepare all our students to lead successful lives.

The successful candidate will be passionate about making a tangible difference in children's lives, particularly those facing educational and social disadvantage in the North. They will share our Trust's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.

REQUIRED FOR THIS ROLE

- Qualified Teacher Status and a good honours degree.
- Values driven; strong teaching ability backed up by outstanding outcomes; significant impact as a middle leader; leadership of high quality curriculum and assessment development.
- High expectations which motivate and challenge students and staff; excellent subject, curriculum and assessment knowledge; clear understanding of the Trust's curriculum and assessment principles and how powerful knowledge liberates young people; accurate analysis, interpretation and understanding of data; behaviour management to ensure a disciplined and joyful culture; leadership in large group settings; communicate with coherence and clarity; ability to lead by example; hold others to account; support colleagues to bring out the best in them; ability to prioritise and manage work load efficiently; good judgement; build effective relationships; commitment to safeguarding.
- High expectations which motivate and challenge students and staff; excellent subject, curriculum and assessment knowledge; clear understanding of the Trust's curriculum and assessment principles and how powerful knowledge liberates young people; accurate analysis, interpretation and understanding of data; behaviour management to ensure a disciplined and joyful culture; leadership in large group settings; communicate with coherence and clarity; ability to lead by example; hold others to account; support colleagues to bring out the best in them; ability to prioritise and manage work load efficiently; good judgement; build effective relationships; commitment to safeguarding.

DESIRED FOR THIS ROLE

- Relevant CPD; post-graduate study.
- Teaching A-level; working in an inner-city area of high deprivation; working in a high-performing school; whole-school leadership; high-leverage coaching.
- Understanding of what makes a Dixons academy different and successful; understanding of aligned autonomy and how this unique model allows organisational agility through the optimal balance between consistency and self-determination; simplify complex issues and develop innovative solutions.



WE ARE A
VALUES-DRIVEN
ORGANISATION,
AND OUR
ACADEMIES ARE
COMMUNITIES
WITH A STRONG
SENSE OF MORAL
PURPOSE

DIXONS OPENSOURCE

Nationally, when educationalists talk about school culture, they talk about Dixons. We share everything we can as frequently as we can – through visits; through teaching on Future Leaders and strategically helping to shape the programme; through board membership and training. We try to speak openly and honestly in articles and blogs and also through the wide-reaching work of the Research School. However, we wanted to ensure that our colleagues at Dixons had access to this thinking – to us, it seemed wrong-headed that almost 15% of maintained secondary schools in England had sent visitors to just one of our schools but we have often not had the chance to visit each other.

As such, we want to codify our content into watchable, listenable bites – nothing as onerous as a podcast or as distancing as a blog. Our thinking is about quick, accessible, agile commentary that can be strung together into coherent sequences but also has efficacy alone. Think of it as a playlist or an album... each song (episode) – just a couple of minutes long – stands alone but there is overall coherence.

We have created three playlists; each one begins with an episode capturing the high-level thinking and then begins to drill down into increasingly granular detail. We are not proposing a specific methodology – more a way of thinking about moving from theory to practice and offering everything we have, free of cost, along the way. To amplify this idea of plurality, we have looked at multiple iterations of artefacts across all our schools.

After starting out on this journey, we have been persuaded that the content would have value to colleagues beyond Dixons; as such, we have moved to a completely open source structure to extend reach and to do so in an agnostic format – one that anyone can access. Please know that we are not a polished production and are simply offering up our work (with no intention of telling others how to do anything); primarily, we want to share our transferable process rather than the inputs.

TIMETABLE

Open events:	5-6pm on Tuesday 19 January and Thursday 21 January (online)
Applications close:	Monday 1 February 2021 (12 noon)
Interviews w/b:	W/c 1 and 8 February 2021





**WE ARE
AMBITIOUS
AND MAKE
NO EXCUSES
BASED ON OUR
STUDENTS'
BACKGROUNDS**



www.dixonsat.com

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