



David Ross Education Trust

Broadening Horizons

APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

CANDIDATE PACK

MARCH 2025



Perrett
Laver

“

It is my belief that British education needs to be broader in the experiences and opportunities that it provides for young people. The 21st-century workplace needs open-minded and creative thinkers who are able to address the challenges of our times.

This is why a David Ross Education Trust education is compellingly different. As a leading multi-academy trust, we are committed to giving every student attending one of our schools a world-class education. An education that creates academically gifted, confident, well-rounded young people in the classroom, in the workplace and in their communities.

We pride ourselves on our academic rigour, driven by talented, dedicated and inspiring teachers who help our students to fulfil their true potential. We believe in opening our students' eyes to the world around them. We do this through the only academy-wide enrichment programme of its kind within the state education sector. A programme that gives our students access to the kinds of life-changing experiences normally only available at fee-paying schools.

Our promise to every student at one of our schools is clear; we will help them to become their confident, all-round best. ”

David Ross

Sponsor

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

David Ross Education Trust (DRET) is a network of unique and diverse academies across the country, committed to delivering a world-class, knowledge-rich education that empowers pupils to reach their fullest potential. Spanning North Yorkshire, East Riding, the Midlands, and London, our network of 36 academies serves over 14,600 pupils and employs 2,300 dedicated staff.

Our family of schools includes 24 primaries, 10 secondaries, an all-through school in London's Olympic Park, and a special school in Lincolnshire supporting pupils aged 2–19 with a broad range of special educational needs. As one of only 11 system leaders nationwide, we are recognised for our unwavering commitment to educational excellence, our innovative curriculum, and ability to drive sustained school improvement at scale.

At the heart of our Mission is a deep belief in the transformative power of education. We are committed to ensuring that every child – regardless of their background – has access to an exceptional academic experience enriched by extensive co-curricular opportunities. From small rural primaries to large urban secondaries, our academies benefit from the strength of a collaborative, values-driven

community, in which expertise is shared, best practices are embedded, and each school retains its distinctive character.

We now seek a dynamic and strategic CEO to succeed Stuart Burns after five years of exceptional service. The appointee will possess the vision, intellectual acumen, and clear sense of moral purpose to shape the future of education within our Trust. They will not only continue to develop and empower a high performing Executive Team, but will contribute to the wider national conversation on how the multi-academy trust sector is continuing to change and grow. This is a rare opportunity to influence the lives of thousands of young people, working alongside a community of dedicated educators and professionals united by a shared commitment to excellence.



OUR MISSION, OUR VISION, OUR VALUES

Our mission, vision and values are instrumental to everything we do. We believe they represent all we have achieved so far and will continue to strive for in our future years.

Our Mission

To broaden the horizons of our pupils through the provision of a world-class education.

Our Vision

A world-class education that is ambitious, broad and knowledge-rich, and that equips our pupils to live full, rich and successful lives.

Our Values

We are unashamedly ambitious for the quality of care and all-round education of the children and young people we serve. We want to provide access to outstanding opportunities within the classroom and beyond.

We are highly aspirational and expect all of our students and staff to aim high for themselves and to support each other in those aspirations. We will provide staff with the skills and knowledge to teach well and create a culture where high performance is expected.

We are courageous in our approach, supporting and standing up for each other, thinking big and not being afraid to try new ideas and strategies in the pursuit of excellence.

We are respectful of each other regardless of age, identity and background, creating an environment of calm, scholarly endeavour in our classrooms and respecting the professional integrity of all staff across academic and business functions.

THE DRET WAY



At DRET we are committed to providing a world-class education that combines the best of the independent and state sectors. While our academies reflect the diverse communities they serve, they are united by a shared ethos and a relentless ambition for excellence. Our approach ensures that every pupil, regardless of background, has access to exceptional teaching, enrichment, and opportunities that prepare them to thrive in an ever-changing world.

Our Approach

The DRET Way is built upon a set of core principles that shape every academy within the Trust. At the heart of our approach is **academic excellence**, with a rigorous, knowledge-rich curriculum delivered by expert educators who inspire and challenge pupils to achieve their full potential. **Our house system** fosters a culture of teamwork, leadership, and a strong sense of belonging, ensuring that every student feels part of a supportive community.

Beyond the classroom, we are committed to **extensive co-curricular opportunities**, enriching pupils' experiences through sport, music, and the arts. An **early and relentless focus on literacy** underpins all learning, ensuring that every child develops

the foundational skills necessary for lifelong success. We maintain **high expectations** through a clear uniform code that instils personal responsibility and pride in every student.

While each of our schools retains its **local leadership** and unique identity, they all benefit from the collective strength, expertise, and ambition of the Trust. Local Governing Bodies and each Principal within the DRET family are encouraged to exercise their autonomy within the Trust's wider framework.

Through these shared commitments, we are raising aspirations, transforming outcomes, and broadening the horizons of every child in our care.

Outstanding Opportunities

A DRET education extends far beyond the classroom, ensuring that pupils have access to the same opportunities traditionally found in leading independent schools. Our enrichment programme is designed to inspire, challenge, and equip students with the skills needed for success in life.

Through partnerships with outstanding organisations and individuals, we provide:

- Elite coaching and specialist tutoring across sport, music, and the arts.

- Flagship competitions and national events, fostering ambition and resilience.
- A diverse range of cultural, leadership, and adventure opportunities that shape well-rounded individuals.

These experiences not only enhance academic success but also develop character, confidence, and leadership skills – ensuring that our pupils stand out in higher education and the workplace.

THE DRET WAY

A World-Class Education

Every DRET academy is on a clear pathway to excellence. Our approach ensures that all schools benefit from shared expertise, best practices, and structured support to achieve the highest standards.

To deliver this vision, we are:

- Implementing a standardised school transformation model, ensuring every academy is on the path to outstanding.
- Embedding a challenging, knowledge-rich curriculum taught by inspiring educators.

- Using data-driven insights to enhance teaching and student outcomes.
- Investing in teacher training and leadership development, ensuring our staff are among the best in the profession.

We believe that every child, regardless of background, deserves a world-class education, and we are committed to making this a reality in every DRET school.

Continued Development

Our commitment to excellence extends to our educators. As a Teaching School Hub, DRET plays a vital role in teacher and leadership development, supporting schools across North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire. Through the Early Career Framework and National Professional Qualifications, we ensure that every teacher receives the training and

support needed to excel in the classroom.

By working in partnership with Lincolnshire Research School and designated Curriculum Hubs, we make it easier for schools to access cutting-edge educational expertise, ensuring that every child benefits from exceptional teaching.



OUR TEAM



The Trust is powered by a team of over 2,300 dedicated staff, all committed to transforming the life chances of young people across our network. While the Trust provides the strategic framework and operational foundations, our success is driven by the collective efforts and achievements of those who work within it. This shared commitment is guided by the vision of our Trust Board and supported by a highly skilled Executive Team that ensures best practice and innovation are embedded across all aspects of our work.

Governance

DRET is governed by an experienced Trust Board that oversees educational excellence, financial sustainability, and the development of a high-performing workforce. The Board ensures that all decision-making aligns with the Trust's core vision, holding the organisation to the highest standards.

The Board of Trustees has ultimate oversight, with the CEO reporting directly to the Chair of

Trustees and Founder, David Ross. As a highly engaged leader, David is actively involved in the Trust's work, regularly visiting academies to connect with staff and students alike. The Trustees themselves are held accountable by DRET's Members, who serve as DRET's guardians of governance, ensuring the Trust remains focused on its charitable purpose and long-term success.

Executive Team

DRET's new Chief Executive Officer will lead a high-performing Executive Team, composed of both educational and central services professionals, including:

- **Simon Rose** – Deputy Chief Executive Officer;
- **Steve West** – Interim Director of Secondary Education;
- **Rachel Ridgill** – Director of HR;
- **Jane Spencer** – Chief Finance Officer;
- **Jonathan French** – Director of Operations;
- **Maria Maltby** – Director of Governance;
- **Peter Wilson** – Commercial and Transformation (Projects) Director.

This team is further supported by specialist education leaders in both the Primary and Secondary Education Teams, as well as the Heads of Service across key operational areas, including Finances, HR, IT and Data, Estates and Capital Programmes, Primary Operations, Data Protection and Compliance, Procurement, Sports Enrichment and Music.

Together, this leadership structure ensures rigorous academic standards, operational excellence, and strategic growth, enabling DRET to continue delivering an outstanding education for every child within our academies.

JOB DESCRIPTION



Job Title:

Chief Executive Officer

Salary and Benefits:

Attractive salary for the right candidate, commensurate with experience. Excellent contributory pension scheme and benefits.

Location:

Based at Head Office in Loughborough but with frequent travel between academies nationally.

DRET Purpose:

Giving our young people access to a world-class education and enrichment experiences is what drives us. Our students benefit from a wealth of opportunities to develop, learn and lead. From the classroom, to cultural visits, sports, music and arts and engaging with our local communities, the rich and varied experiences we create help fuel ambition and unlock potential. Their education and experiences equip our young people with the leadership skills, team spirit, resilience and confidence to become outstanding citizens.

Job Purpose:

The appointee will develop the Trust's overall strategy to ensure sustainability and growth across the Trust, uniting systems and people in an unwavering commitment to the highest achievement for all, regardless of background or ability. They will lead by example to embed a shared culture of outstanding performance and continuous improvement.

Background:

We are located in Northamptonshire, Lincolnshire, Leicestershire, London and the Yorkshire/Humber region. The network is made up of primary, secondary and special academies.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

The appointee will develop the Trust's overall strategy to ensure sustainability and growth across the Trust, uniting systems and people in an unwavering commitment to the highest achievement for all, regardless of background or ability. They will lead by example to embed a shared culture of outstanding performance and continuous improvement.

The appointee will develop and maintain the Trust's relationships with a range of stakeholders including the Board, the Department for Education, and Ofsted, and the wide range of academic, sporting and cultural partners with whom we work.

More specifically the responsibilities of our Chief Executive can be described as follows:

Strategic Leadership

- to shape and steward the strategic direction of the Trust, supporting and monitoring the successful implementation of agreed strategic goals across our 36 academies, with clear deliverables and effective accountability;
 - to continue to develop The DRET Way with central team leaders and academy Principals, ensuring a distinctive identity for DRET and its academies.
 - to lead the sustainable growth of our Trust, seeking suitable future schools and leading the successful conversions for any schools aspiring to join our Trust;
 - to anticipate the political and policy context at both local and national level to the benefit of DRET, seizing opportunities and innovating to the advantage of our young people.
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People Leadership

- to provide inspirational leadership to all stakeholders;
- to build strong and trusted relationships with Trustees, providing timely and accurate information to support them in discharging their duties, and working with them collaboratively in shaping the vision for the Trust;
- to build further capacity and capability in an already strong central team, ensuring that the right accountabilities and support structures are in place to enable all colleagues to achieve their highest potential;
- to recruit and retain the best school leaders and teachers, ensuring effective succession planning and career pathways;
- to ensure that mechanisms are in place for identifying and bringing on leadership talent across the organisation such that continued excellence can be embedded across the DRET estate.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Operational and Financial Leadership

- to take responsibility for the annual business plan, long-term strategic plan, self-evaluation, academic performance improvement plans, financial management plans and asset management, with a particular focus on the complexity of the Trust's secondary estate and the further development of the commercial strategy and performance;
- to set and agree with Trustees ambitious annual and longer-term academic performance targets for all schools and to maintain a framework of indicators cascaded through the central and leadership teams designed to monitor performance against agreed targets;
- to ensure that the Trust's systems give real-time understanding of performance, provide assurance on outcomes and the quality and consistency of practice and allow for rapid and targeted response to emerging concerns;
- to hold leaders accountable for performance and develop a cadence of review and monitoring with the leadership team that will provide early insight on progress, will highlight issues and ensure early action taken to resolve them;
- to lead the Trust's central team and academy Principals in operating DRET as a sustainable and commercially viable MAT, fostering a culture of sound financial management and continuous improvement across a range of financial and operational metrics.

External Relations

- in partnership with the Chair, to act as an ambassador for DRET, presenting our vision and values to wider audiences;
- to build and nurture excellent relationships with the Department for Education, Ofsted and other external partners as previously described
- to build and nurture excellent relationships with various agencies, local authorities, local communities, businesses and other MATs;
- to continue to build our profile nationally as a leading MAT and a key influencer in education debate.

Whilst every effort has been made to explain the main duties and responsibilities of the post, each individual task undertaken may not be identified. Employees will be expected to comply with any reasonable request from those in a position of responsibility to undertake work of a similar level that is not specified in this job description.



PERSON SPECIFICATION

The Chief Executive of David Ross Education Trust will be a leader of exceptional calibre. They will demonstrate the following qualifications, experience, knowledge, skills and personal attributes:

The appointee will develop and maintain the Trust's relationships with a range of stakeholders including the Board, the Department for Education, and Ofsted, and the wide range of academic, sporting and cultural partners with whom we work.

More specifically the responsibilities of our Chief Executive can be described as follows:

Education & Qualifications

- a good first degree;
- a recognised post-graduate qualification (desirable, not essential);
- a demonstrable record of continuous professional development.

Essential knowledge and skills

- a proven record of successful strategic and operational leadership in rapidly evolving, complex, multi-site organisations;
- experience of leading people and retaining talent successfully through periods of growth and development;
- an excellent track record of raising standards and performance in complex, multi-stakeholder settings;
- a proven record of working closely with Boards to develop and deliver both long term strategies and short to medium term performance objectives.
- successful track record of robust financial management and budgetary control and of creating a leadership culture that ensures delivery of tough performance targets with constrained financial resources.

Personal attributes

- flexible, positive and resilient;
- inspirational in the leadership of teams;
- energetic and entrepreneurial;
- reflective, self-aware and ready to learn;
- creative and able to innovate;
- welcomes challenge and can challenge others appropriately;
- the highest standards of professional and personal integrity;
- a belief in learning from the independent sector and other educational systems to develop world-class provision;
- understands the language of education;
- a deep commitment to improving educational outcomes for children of all backgrounds.

Applicants should note that David Ross Education Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. All successful applicants will be required to undertake an Enhanced DBS check.

APPOINTMENT PROCESS AND HOW TO APPLY



DRET has retained the services of Perrett Laver to help identify the widest possible field of suitable candidates and assist in the assessment of candidates against the requirements for the role. An executive search exercise is being undertaken alongside the public advertisement of the post.

Applicants should submit a full curriculum vitae, the application form and a covering letter of application addressed to David Ross, Chair, which fully addresses the competencies outlined in the job description and person specification and outlines their interest in DRET.

Completed applications should be uploaded at <https://candidates.perrettlaver.com/vacancies/> quoting reference number 7817. The closing date for applications is 08:30 BST on Thursday 24 April 2025.

The longlist of candidates will be determined in the week commencing 28 April 2025 and longlisted candidates will be invited for interview with Perrett Laver during the weeks commencing 28 April and 5 May 2025. The shortlist of candidates will be selected in the week commencing 12 May 2025 and shortlisted candidates will be invited to attend a final selection process with DRET in the week commencing 19 May 2025.

DRET is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. The successful candidate must be willing to undergo an enhanced disclosure through the Disclosure and Barring Service. DRET's safer recruitment policy is available on request.

Protecting your personal data is of the utmost importance to Perrett Laver and we take this responsibility very seriously. Any information obtained by our trading divisions is held and processed in accordance with the relevant data protection legislation. The data you provide us with is securely stored on our computerised database and transferred to our clients for the purposes of presenting you as a candidate and/or considering your suitability for a role you have registered interest in.

As an equal opportunities employer, we encourage applications from suitably qualified candidates irrespective of background. If for any reason you require adjustments to support your application, please let us know in confidence.





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Thorpe Hill | Loughborough | Leicestershire | LE11 4SQ

