



**OUR LADY  
IMMACULATE**  
CATHOLIC ACADEMIES TRUST



# STRATEGIC EXECUTIVE LEAD CANDIDATE PACK



Helping schools & trusts appoint the best Senior Leaders



## WELCOME LETTER

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in the post of Strategic Executive Lead in Our Lady Immaculate Catholic Academies Trust (OLICAT).

### Our Background

We are a relatively new Trust formed from the merger of other Trusts and schools in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Northampton. After a period of planning, two Trusts were created in the Diocese; OLICAT for the northern part of the Diocese; St Thomas Trust (STCAT) for the southern part.

At Diocesan level we are answerable to The Duns Scotus Trust and the Bishop and Diocesan Trustees. We are supported by the Diocesan Education Officer, who is our liaison point with the Diocese.

### What We Have Achieved

Since their formation both Trusts have expanded to take in other Diocesan Schools in accordance with the Diocesan Plan, and that development will continue.

As OLICAT was created in February 2020 we immediately faced the Covid 19 pandemic. The strength of the Trust showed immediately. All the schools who became part of the Trust had each other and the Central Team to provide support and guidance and well-being assistance in those most difficult times.

The pandemic did not delay the development of the Trust. We knew we had challenges of school improvement for all our schools, but some were in need of more focused attention, as they were in the Required Improvement category. That situation is now largely remedied. We also forged ahead to bring different school and previous Trust systems together to enable the Trust to operate consistently and effectively and reliably across all our schools. Major benefits in monitoring and management have resulted from all this development activity.





# WELCOME LETTER *CONTINUED*

## How We Did It

The Trust plan that we put into place was formed out of detailed contributions from all our schools and staff. Our ethos is collaboration. Each area continues to contribute to the way forward and, in doing so, we all understand the opportunity, even when demanding challenges confront us; we have all been part of the formation and implementation of the plan. There is only one goal. Every child has to be given the best start and direction in their lives through their education in our Catholic Schools.

This collaborative approach in the Trust has borne fruit. Over the last year more than 18 inspections from Ofsted and the Catholic Inspection Service have validated the improvements we have made in each and every school. Good though this is, it remains very much work in progress.

## What Is Next

The Directors rely heavily on the Strategic Executive Lead and the Central Team to foster the collaboration between every element of the Trust, at every level. We strongly believe that engaging and listening, as well as leading and directing, is producing sustainable outcomes from strong foundations. These very foundations will enable OLICAT to expand to complete the Diocesan directive that all schools should be part of one of our MATS.

## How You Fit Our Future

You are characterised by your demonstrable leadership skills, your eye for sustainable innovation. You appreciate that this is indeed a rare and exceptional opportunity. Be certain, this is not just your next job; the demands are high, but the system is there to ensure you succeed.

We have many challenges ahead; come and show us what you can offer, as we continue our Education journey.



Christopher Donnellan K.C.  
Chair  
On behalf of the Directors of Our Lady Immaculate Catholic Academies Trust

Christopher Donnellan  
Chair of Directors



## MISSION & VALUES

We are a community of 12 Catholic schools across Northamptonshire and Bedford, with over 2000 students and 600 staff. We believe that we are stronger together and that we can be much more than our collective parts.

We work together, learn from one another, share ideas and support each other, as we aspire for excellence in all of our schools.

Our mission statement is not just words, this is how we need to live and breathe as a Trust if we are to be the Catholic MAT we want to be, if we are to get that extra for our pupils that together, we can achieve.

We strive to be beacons of faith and excellence in Catholic Education.

We seek to provide schools of hospitality and welcome so that partnerships are strong and faithful with parents and our communities.

We commit to tending to the needs of the whole child with care and diligence.

We encourage the spirit of individuality among our schools

We expect a leadership of service and kindness as a hallmark of all our schools



As a family of schools,  
inspired by Our Lady  
Immaculate,  
**WE FLOURISH, WE  
LOVE,** and **WE ASPIRE**  
to be who God has  
called us to be.





## SEL JOB DESCRIPTION

**ACCOUNTABLE TO:** Trust Board of Directors

**RESPONSIBLE TO:** Chair of Trust Board of Directors

**RESPONSIBLE FOR:** Trust Senior Leadership Team (the “Central Team”, Finance Director, Trust HR Director,, School Improvement Team, Company Secretary, Senior Data Analyst, Operations Manager), Headteachers of all academies in the Trust and partnership school improvement leads.

**KEY RELATIONSHIPS:** Trust Board of Directors, sub-committees of the Trust Board of Directors, Local School Committees/Governors, Director of Schools, Diocesan Education Service. Other key partners/ stakeholders include (but not exclusive to) Department for Education, Education and Skills Funding Agency, Regional School Commissioner, Local Authorities and Trade Unions.

## CONTEXT

Our Lady Immaculate is a relatively new Catholic Multi-Academy Trust, formed in 2020, to serve the schools in the northern part of the Diocese of Northampton. There are 10 primary schools and 2 secondary schools in the Trust from Northampton, Corby, Kettering, Wellingborough and Bedford. The Trust is following the educational vision of Bishop David and the Diocesan plan to encompass the Catholic Schools in Milton Keynes and other parts of the northern part of the Diocese. The Trust is continuing to develop the Central Team of professionals that support all the schools in the MAT.



## CORE PURPOSE

- Provide dynamic and strategic support and leadership to the Trust Board of Directors of Our Lady Immaculate Catholic Academies Trust ("the Trust") ensuring delivery of the Trust's strategic aims is efficient and effective.
- Ensure the highest standards of academic performance across all of the individual academies within the Trust.
- Co-ordinate opportunities for leadership development and sharing of best practice.
- Execute overall management accountability for the governance and operation of the Trust.
- Develop and uphold the Trust's values and vision, providing inspirational and visible leadership across the Trust to drive achievement of high standards in all areas of the Trust's work, particularly in ensuring the provision of sustainable, outstanding education through the preservation and development of its Catholic character.
- Be accountable as the Trust's Chief Accounting Officer ensuring long term financial sustainability and probity of the Trust.
- Be responsible for compliance with statutory requirements, including safeguarding, health and safety, data protection, equality and provision of quality assurance systems to monitor and evaluate effectiveness of the Trust and the academies within the Trust.

The Trust's objectives relate to the provision of Catholic education. All academies within the Trust are part of the Catholic Church and, as such, are to be conducted as Catholic academies in accordance with Canon Law, the teachings of the Catholic Church and the Trust Deed of the Diocese of Northampton.

It is a genuine occupational requirement<sup>1</sup> that the post of Strategic Executive Leader must be filled by a practising Catholic who can show, by example and from experience, that they will ensure that the Trust and the academies within it are distinctively Catholic in all aspects. It is this duty to preserve and develop the Catholic character of the Trust and the academies within it that provides the context for the proper discharge of all the other duties and responsibilities of the Strategic Executive Leader post.





## MAIN DUTIES:

### Preservation and Development of the Catholic Character of the Trust

- Preserve and develop the Catholic character of the Trust and the academies safeguarding the teachings of the Catholic Church by ensuring the Catholic character of all academies is reflected in every aspect of school life, particularly the curriculum, day-to-day organisation of the academies, staff development, staff and pupil relationships and the partnership between school, parents and parishes.
- Work in partnership with the Director of Schools for the Diocese of Northampton and the Strategic Executive Leader for the other Diocesan MAT to deliver the vision for Catholic Education across the Diocese.
- Ensure each academy within the Trust is able to meet its responsibilities in relation to specific requirements of governance in a Catholic academy.
- Act at all times in accordance with the determinations of the Bishop of Northampton and ensure any directives which may be issued by him are upheld in all academies.

## STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

- Provide inspirational and effective leadership, vision and strategic focus to achieve the highest levels of performance as determined by the Trust Board.
- Report regularly to the Trust Board and ensure that the Board is appropriately informed in order to effectively carry out its functions.
- Support the Trust Board of Directors in the formulation, development and review of strategy and ensure that all decisions made by the Trust Board are fully implemented
- Ensure a culture of continuous improvement and continuous professional development within the Trust.
- Ensure all academies in the Trust are fully inclusive.
- Ensure that expectations for progress and attainment for all pupils are consistently high across the Trust in line with expectations for all areas of the Trust.
- Develop the Trust, its mission and values together with implementing efficient infrastructure allowing the Trust and its academies to focus on achieving excellence.
- Form strategic partnerships with national bodies, other educational institutions, the Diocese of Northampton, business and the wider Catholic and local community and use these to achieve and influence positive outcomes for the Trust and Catholic education within the Diocese of Northampton.



## TEACHING AND LEARNING AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

- Lead the Trust's educational vision by drawing on the person, life and teachings of Jesus Christ and ensure that this vision is understood and supported by employees of the Trust at every level as well as parents, pupils and the wider community.
- Provide effective, inspirational and Christ-centred strategic leadership for all academies, inspiring and motivating all those engaged in the activities of teaching and learning by ensuring that school improvement is at the core of every decision taken in fulfilment of Canon 806 (2) which requires that all Catholic schools are 'at least as academically distinguished as other schools in the area' so that each school meets all national targets/performance measures.
- Provide strategic direction and be accountable for all aspects of Teaching and Learning and professional standards across the Trust.
- Lead the Trust wide school improvement strategy to ensure each academy's performance is identified, analysed, appropriately costed and prioritised solutions are developed and secured.
- Responsible for developing and leading school improvement across the Trust providing quality assurance and accountability achieved by a rigorous and robust system of target setting, regularly reviewed by the Strategic Executive Leader and reported to the Trust Board.

## FINANCE AND RESOURCES

- Act as the Trust's Chief Accounting Officer and ensure that robust systems are in place so that all funds within the Trust are managed efficiently, effectively and in accordance with the Academies Financial Handbook.
- Ensure the Trust's financial viability is secure, firmly based on accurate analysis, proper stewardship of funds, optimum use of resources and the generation of sufficient surplus funding to meet development needs.
- Review and approve each academy annual budget within the Trust and ensure all budgetary targets are met and efficiencies maximised.
- Accountable for managing large scale asset/major capital projects across the Trust estate and ensure all Trust assets and facilities are managed appropriately and consistently
- Ensure efficient and effective procurement systems are established to negotiate and agree optimum services to achieve economies of scale and value for money.
- Lead and advise on the allocation of resources (financial, staffing and physical) across the Trust.
- Develop and maintain a Trust-wide communications and marketing strategy to guide the Trust and staff in their communications both internally and externally including liaising with stakeholders, local and national media and social media.





## PEOPLE MANAGEMENT

- To support leaders across all levels in the Trust to develop clarity in communication, a clear strategy for development and challenge that is in line with our mission and values. The mission that is founded on respect for each individual and shows kindness to all.
- To engage collaboratively across all levels of the Trust to achieve the purpose of the Trust in providing a Catholic Education for every child.
- Ensure implementation of the requirements set out in the Bishops' Memorandum on the Appointment of Teachers in Catholic Schools in respect of staffing and the appropriate use of Catholic Education Service employment documentation taking into account any requirements specified by the Diocese of Northampton and employment legislation.
- Ensure the Trust has an effective workforce strategy providing the efficient and effective deployment of all staffing resources and the ability to develop capacity for succession planning.
- Ensure the Trust has an effective and consistent system of performance management that provides for the continuous development of all employees and which in particular is successful in developing future Catholic leaders of education.
- Ensure the Trust has an effective HR strategy delivering expert HR advice to the schools/academies on recruitment and retention, pay and conditions of service, staff performance, employee relations, health and wellbeing and staff development supported by legally compliant HR policies, processes, procedures and internal management controls.
- Line manage and support the Trust SLT, Partnership School Improvement leads and all Head teachers.
- Coach and mentor Head teachers, as required, providing advice, guidance and development strategies to enhance their leadership skills, working with partnership school improvement leads.
- Support the Board of Directors with the recruitment and performance management of Head teachers within the Trust.

## COMPLIANCE AND RISK

- Ensure the Trust complies with all legislative and regulatory requirements to meet its statutory responsibilities including Health and Safety, Safeguarding, requirements of Companies House, the Charity Commission, Data Protection & Copyright, Equality and Inclusion.
- Ensure that the Trust meets all requirements laid down in Canon Law.
- Ensure compliance with the Funding Agreement(s) and Trust Scheme of Delegation.
- Be responsible for ensuring the implementation of all policies across the Trust.
- Ensure robust and appropriate proactive risk mitigation is managed for the Trust and align the Trust risk strategy to academy/school risk strategies.
- Ensure there are clear quality assurance systems embedded across the Trust that drive consistency and improvement in performance.





The post-holder must carry out their duties with full regard to the Trust's Equal Opportunities Policy in relation to employment and service delivery.

The Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This post is subject to satisfactory references which will be requested prior to interview, an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, medical check, evidence of qualifications plus verification of the right to work in the UK.

The Trust is committed to ensuring that it complies with all legislative requirements on safeguarding and child protection and that the Trust actively values and promotes diversity, unity and community cohesion and that it supports pupils to become successful, compassionate citizens. The Trust will ensure a continual focus on equality as measured by pupil progress and outcomes.

Whilst every effort has been made to outline the key duties and responsibilities of the role, it is not an exclusive list. The duties and responsibilities of the role may vary from time to time and the post holder may be required to undertake other duties and responsibilities commensurate with the role.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION RELATING TO THE POST

**START DATE:** 1st September 2025 | **SALARY:** to be negotiated | **CONTRACT:** Permanent

**PENSION:** Teachers' Pension Scheme (for existing members) or other by arrangement

**HOURS:** 37 hours per week (full-time) however, staff at this level will normally be required to work additional hours to meet the requirements of the role.

There will be a requirement to work outside of normal office hours.

**EXPENSES:** Work-related expenses will be paid per the Trust Expenses policy

**ANNUAL LEAVE:** 30 days per calendar year – normally to be taken outside of term time(s) plus bank holidays

**NOTICE PERIOD:** 6 months | **DBS:** Enhanced DBS required

**TRAVEL:** The Strategic Executive Leader will be required to travel between, and work at the Trust Offices and academies of the Trust and other geographical locations associated with the Trust and/or Diocese. It is essential that the Strategic Executive Leader holds a valid UK driving license.

**REFERENCES:** In addition to 2 professional references a positive and supportive reference is required from a priest where the applicant worships regularly

**MEDICAL:** The successful applicant will be required to complete a Medical Questionnaire.



## TRAINING AND QUALIFICATIONS

	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	ASSESSED
Educated to degree level	•		A
Qualified Teacher Status	•		A
Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies or equivalent		•	A
National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH)		•	A
National Leader in Education/Local Leader in Education		•	A
Trained Ofsted and/or Diocesan Inspector		•	A
Management training or qualification	•		A
Evidence of commitment to continuing professional and personal development of self and others	•		A

## FAITH COMMITMENT

Practising Catholic in full communion with the Catholic Church	•		R
Able to articulate a clear philosophy for Catholic education	•		I
Commitment to leadership role in spiritual development of pupils and staff	•		I
Understanding of and commitment to curriculum Religious Education in a Catholic school	•		I
Understanding the importance of sensitivity in working with other denominations and faiths in the local community	•		I

## EXPERIENCE OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT

Experience of leading a Multi Academy Trust preferably within a Catholic school setting		•	A
Significant experience of headship in a Catholic school with demonstrable impact on outcomes for pupils	•		A
Experience of working collegiately with other Professional experts (e.g. Finance, HR, Estates, COO) to deliver an organisational strategy.	•		I
Demonstrable experience of successful system leadership/school improvement across a wide and diverse range of schools leading to rapid and sustained improvement		•	A/I
Demonstrable use of successful strategies for raising pupil achievement and advancing effective teaching and learning	•		I
Evidence of leading strategic planning and financial management, including identifying and addressing strategic risks and building organisational resilience and sustainability.	•		I
Experience of successfully leading and managing whole school change initiatives	•		I
Experience of working cross educational phases between other academies/schools.	•		I
Experience of developing partnership working across a Multi Academy Trust		•	I

## SAFEGUARDING

Have a comprehensive knowledge of safeguarding in educational settings	•		A/I
Have significant practical experience as a designated safeguarding lead in an educational setting		•	A

# SEL PERSON SPECIFICATION *CONTINUED*

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	ASSESSED
Understanding of the Catholic MAT's role	•		I
Current and up-to-date knowledge and understanding of effective governance systems in MATs		•	I
Demonstrable up-to-date knowledge of developments in education	•		I
Proven experience of strategic financial management, including budget formulation, medium-term financial planning, monitoring and control	•		I
Evidence of strategic planning which has brought about significant organisational change	•		I
Evidence of ability to build effective leadership teams and experience of partnership working of leadership teams across a Trust	•		I
Evidence of robust performance management resulting in improvement in standards and building leadership capacity	•		I
Experience in monitoring, analysing and reporting on an organisation's activity, outcomes and impact to Directors or governors.	•		I
Experience of risk management and producing proactive risk mitigation strategies.	•		I
Understanding of equal opportunities and able to put this into practice, including the need to prepare pupils for life in a multi-faith, multi-cultural society	•		I
Experience of promoting equality and diversity in relation to employment and service delivery	•		I
Proven success in building effective partnerships with the DfE and local authorities		•	I
PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES			
Ability to think strategically and develop a vision for the MAT underpinned by a strong Catholic ethos and values	•		I
Ability to cultivate a sense of community within the MAT	•		I
Strategic Exec Lead Job Description & Person Spec/November 2024	•		I
Ability to build positive organisational culture, encourage reflection, delegate responsibility, build teams, strive for continuous improvement and inspire staff to achieve their full potential	•		I
Ability to maintain positive and constructive relationships with Headteachers, governors, parents, local parishes and with other individuals and agencies associated with the MAT	•		I
Ability to think analytically, making informed use of inspection, benchmarking, KPIs and research findings	•		I
Ability to investigate problems, evaluate options, identify solutions, make and implement plans and monitor outcomes	•		I
Ability to work effectively and pragmatically within policies and procedures	•		A/I
Well-developed written, presentation and public speaking skills including the ability to communicate effectively with a wide range of audiences	•		A/I
Strong IT skills, ability to identify where technological innovation could make systems/processes more efficient and/or effective.	•		I
Ability to organise work, prioritise tasks, make decisions and manage time effectively providing calm and mature leadership in the context of a dynamic and fast environment.	•		R
Ability to manage conflict effectively.	•		R/I



# SEL PERSON SPECIFICATION *CONTINUED*

Personal Attributes	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	ASSESSED
To be capable of being the public face of the MAT and influencing strategic partners and other external bodies for the benefit the MAT and Catholic education in the Diocese of Northampton	•		I
Able to bring presence and gravitas to the role whilst remaining approachable and professional at all times.	•		I
Demonstrate a variety of leadership styles and management approaches	•		I
To have emotional resilience	•		I
To have the ability to self-evaluate and reflect	•		I
Able to adapt to changing circumstances and new ideas	•		I
Visible and approachable, empathetic and enjoys engaging with children of all ages, staff, parents and the wider community.	•		R
Commitment to equality of opportunity and inclusion within a Catholic ethos.	•		A
To be an inspiring role model for staff and pupils	•		R/I

## HOW TO APPLY

If you would like to discover more about this exciting opportunity, need any further information or you wish to have an informal discussion, please contact our retained consultant at Academicis, Ross Laird:

**rlaird@academicis.co.uk or 01223 907979 / 07901 585959**

Please email your application to, Ross Laird: [rlaird@academicis.co.uk](mailto:rlaird@academicis.co.uk)

**Closing date:** 3rd January 2025

**Shortlisting:** 6th January 2025

**Interview dates:** 9th & 10th January 2025



c/o St Thomas More Secondary School  
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