

# KING EDWARD VI FOUNDATION

## *Chief Executive Officer*

### Candidate Information



KING EDWARD VI  
FOUNDATION  
BIRMINGHAM

*Educational excellence for our City*



KING EDWARD VI  
ACADEMY TRUST  
BIRMINGHAM

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# Welcome

We are delighted that you have taken an interest in King Edward VI Foundation and Academy Trust and in becoming our next Chief Executive Officer.

Our mission is bold and clear: to make Birmingham the best place in the UK in which to be educated. As a powerful collective, we are determined to enable our city's young people to harness and maximise their potential, wherever they live, irrespective of their circumstances and whatever their aptitudes: academic, occupational, sporting or cultural.

We are a progressive and influential educational charity and Multi Academy Trust, recognised as one of the highest-performing groups of schools in the UK. Our reputation is underpinned by a long and distinguished history, yet we pride ourselves on being innovative and forward-thinking.

The Foundation is rich with stories of lives transformed through educational experience and opportunity, and we are tremendously proud of all that we have achieved together. All colleagues, across schools, the central team and our external partners, work tirelessly to ensure that we provide the foundations on which our pupils can grow and flourish, whether that is in pupil-facing programmes, professional development opportunities for our staff or behind-the-scenes initiatives that improve organisational health.

The formation of the King Edward VI Academy Trust in 2017 and subsequent expansion have resulted in a group of 14 secondary schools: two independent schools, six state grammar schools, and six comprehensives, some serving Birmingham's most deprived communities. Our recent expansion into a wider diversity of local communities is enabling us to accelerate our strategies for improving the life chances of young people in Birmingham. These include areas where King Edward's had, for too long, no footprint. It is a strategy which embraces all our schools, independent and academies, selective and non-selective, opening as many doors for as many students as we can. Working together, we are reinvigorating our charitable mission in Europe's youngest super-diverse city.

As we begin to implement the next phase of our Strategic Plan 2026–31, we are poised to continue this ambitious journey. Based on our three strategic pillars – learning with us, working with us, partnering with us – we will continue to deliver exciting initiatives and projects and embed an innovative and collaborative culture, all against a strong financial backdrop. We are excited about our upcoming 475th anniversary in 2027 and eager for the next 475 years.

Our outgoing leader, Jodh Dhesi, has achieved much for the Foundation, and we now look for an exceptional leader to take the organisation through its next phase. The enviable uniqueness of the Foundation makes it an exciting place to work and lead. We look forward immensely to working with our new Chief Executive Officer and to welcoming you to our prestigious and ambitious organisation.

If you are inspired by our mission, please read on. We look forward to hearing from you.



*Erica Conway*

Chair designate of the Foundation



# The organisation

The mission of King Edward VI Foundation is simple: to make Birmingham the best place to be educated in the UK.

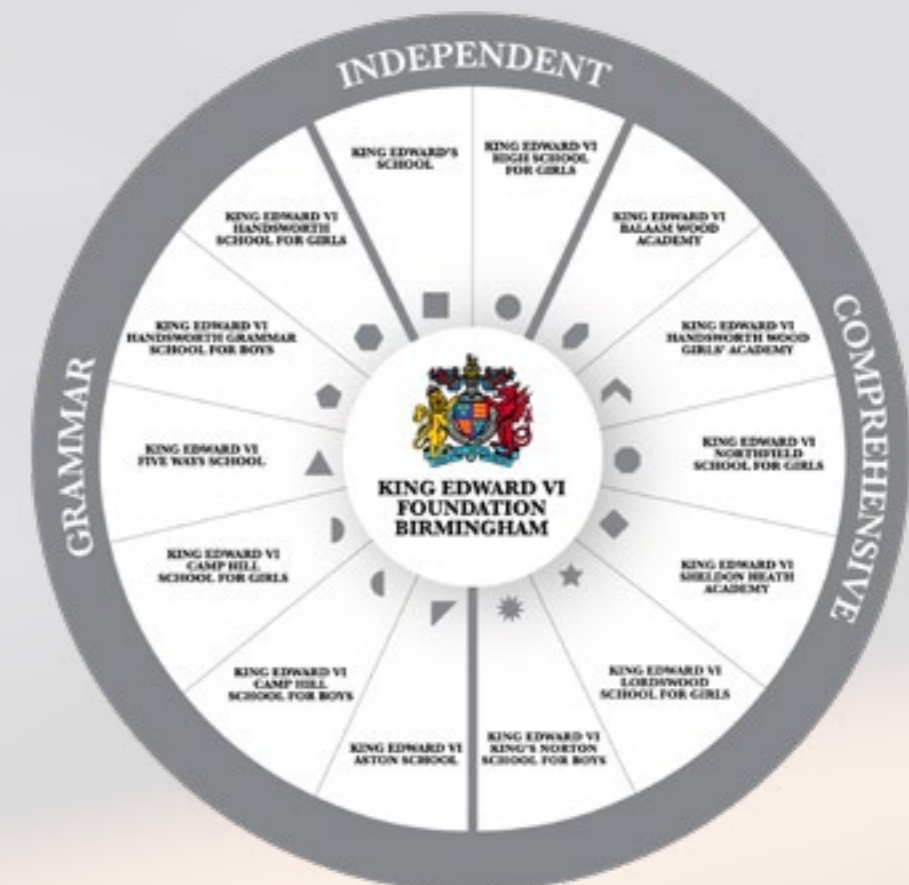
In many ways, this has not changed since King Edward's School was founded in 1552. However, Birmingham has grown from being little more than a village to the nation's second city, with a population of just over one million, a proud industrial heritage and a richness of diversity and innovation.

The Foundation employs over 2,000 staff and comprises two different legal entities:

- The Foundation Charity (formally the Schools of King Edward VI in Birmingham), which operates two independent schools. It also manages a significant and historic endowment, owns the land for several of the academies and employs the staff that work in the independent schools and the central team.
- The Academy Trust, which is the legal entity recognised by the Government to operate the 12 King Edward VI academies in the city. The Trust is the legal employer of staff who work in the academies.

Since 2017, when the Academy Trust was established, the Foundation's role and scope of activity have necessarily widened. Wherever our 13,000+ students are living and learning, our commitment is to deliver educational excellence so that they, along with our staff and partners, can thrive.

If we are to serve the city's children, we recognise that we need to provide a diverse range of schools: independent as well as academies, selective and comprehensive. And we believe that those schools need to be accessible to all, regardless of ethnic, religious and social background.



Our commitment to playing a constructive, influential role in the life of the city is reinforced by our growing network of partnerships and outreach work and by our determination to work closely with business and cultural organisations and, as appropriate, with local and national government.

Of course, to achieve our mission, we need to do even more. In future years, we need to strengthen our work with other schools in the city and establish ourselves as a role model for other educational organisations, responding positively to the challenging demands of our fast-changing academic and employment environments.

### *Ofsted and ISI outcomes across our schools*

Under the previous Ofsted framework, all schools in the Academy Trust were rated “good” or “outstanding”. Of particular note was the “good” rating received by King Edward VI Balaam Wood Academy in its first inspection as part of the Academy Trust, taking it out of an “inadequate” banding and giving the local community a good school for the first time in 18 years; the movement of King Edward VI Lordwood School for Girls from “requires improvement” to “good” in its first inspection as part of the Academy Trust; and the retention of “outstanding” ratings by a significantly higher proportion of schools than nationally.

Ofsted inspection reports during the period highlight the work of the Academy Trust and Foundation in supporting the schools.

*“The trust has provided considerable support for Balaam Wood since the school joined them. It has implemented robust improvement plans successfully, and this is enabling the school to flourish.”*

*King Edward VI Balaam Wood Academy*

*“The trust supports the school well, particularly in relation to the curriculum.”*

*King Edward VI Lordwood School for Girls*

King Edward’s School and King Edward VI High School for Girls both meet all the ISI standards with highly positive reports.

### *Widening access*

The Foundation and Academy Trust are committed to widening access through admissions policies and support for pupils.

All six comprehensive academies have percentages of pupils entitled to Pupil Premium above the national average.

The admissions policy for the grammar schools has a preferential entrance exam score for pupils entitled to Pupil Premium. In March 2026, all six schools offered over 25% of places to this group of pupils, which is three times the national average for grammar schools. There is an extensive outreach and familiarisation programme to encourage pupils from underrepresented backgrounds, particularly white British working class, to apply for the entrance test.

The two independent schools offer means-tested bursaries (assisted places) supported by the Foundation, charitable trusts for the schools and alumni. The proportion of pupils on assisted places at the two schools is double the national average for independent schools.



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## *Healthy intake*

The Academy Trust is unusual in that all its schools are oversubscribed for Year 7 year on year. This is down to a combination of academic outcomes, enrichment opportunities, reputation, investment in facilities, community engagement and marketing.

The independent schools have successfully dealt with a challenging national policy picture for private education and have strong pupil cohorts due to their preeminent reputation in the region.

All three types of school have received regional or national accolades.

## *Initial teacher training*

The Academy Trust operates a successful School-Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) arm called King Edward's Consortium (KEC). Consisting of 23 excellent schools in the Birmingham area, both within and outside the Foundation, the strength of the partnership lies in its diversity, longevity and experience. Its mixture of comprehensive, selective, independent, mixed, single-sex, 11-16 and 11-18 schools gives diverse placements for trainees. The KEC is an important part of the Foundation and Academy Trust and provides a pipeline of new entrants to the profession in Birmingham.

## *Foundation Education Group*

Headteachers play an important role in the development of educational strategy for the Foundation and Academy Trust in a number of ways and particularly through their participation in the Foundation Education Group (FEG). Meeting for three full-day sessions during the year, FEG discusses topical and strategic educational matters, shares and showcases best practice from across the schools, and brings the clusters and independent schools together.

FEG is chaired by the Chief Master & Principal of the two independent schools, who also has the title of "Headmaster of the Foundation". This is a historic role which seeks to bring all the Foundation's schools together in educational endeavour.

**View our Foundation Strategy 2026-31 [here](#).**

**Watch our Foundation Video [here](#).**



# Financial position

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The King Edward VI Foundation is a complex educational group comprising a substantial charitable investment portfolio, a large multi-academy trust, two independent schools and a central function. The CEO is accountable for the financial performance, sustainability and long-term resilience of the entire group.

The Foundation's financial model rests on several interdependent pillars:

## *Charitable investment portfolio*

The Foundation holds and manages an investment portfolio valued at over £160 million, invested across listed assets and a significant property estate. The portfolio is managed to achieve a sustainable long-term total return (target CPI + 3.5%), balancing capital growth and income generation. Returns are applied to further the charitable objectives of the Foundation across the whole family of schools, supporting strategic priorities and strengthening long-term independence.

## *Academy Trust*

The Academy Trust has a revenue budget of almost £100m, operates within public funding constraints and is expected to generate prudent operating surpluses (currently targeting 2%) to maintain resilience and support strategic investment. It benefits from annual capital grant funding and maintains defined reserve buffers. The CEO must ensure financial discipline, workforce sustainability, and value for money across all state-funded schools.

## *Independent schools*

Working in close partnership with the Chief Master & Principal, the CEO supports the financial strength and long-term sustainability of the independent schools. The schools target an annual investment surplus of c.10%, reinvested in infrastructure and educational development. Fee strategy, pupil recruitment, cost control, and capital investment must be carefully balanced within a changing economic and regulatory environment.

## *Advancement and income diversification*

A significant strategic priority is the development of a Foundation-wide advancement strategy. This marks a shift from school-specific fundraising to a coordinated group approach spanning alumni engagement, corporate partnerships and philanthropy. The ambition is to diversify income streams, expand support for Assisted Places and other strategic initiatives, and strengthen the Foundation's long-term financial independence across both the independent and academy sectors.

By securing philanthropic gifts, we plan to create a "Student Support Fund" to support and expand our Assisted Places schemes and give students from Foundation schools assistance to progress to 6th Form at either one of the independent schools or another Foundation school.

Plans are underway to create a 'Centre of Excellence' to advance the educational vision of the Foundation, using many Foundation case studies as examples to 'give life' to the benefits that the Centre offers and securing philanthropists who have an interest in giving to a major new education facility.

Across all entities, the CEO must align financial strategy with educational ambition, manage risk intelligently and deploy resources to maximise impact in pursuit of the Foundation's charitable mission.



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# Vision, mission and values

## Our aspiration

To make Birmingham the best place to be educated in the UK.

## Our vision

To be a leader in transforming lives and futures through educational experience and opportunity, serving Birmingham and influencing beyond.

## Our mission

To empower our schools in the heart of the UK to deliver educational excellence, enabling our students, staff and partners to thrive.

## Our values



We strive for excellence in all parts of the well-rounded and forward-looking education our schools deliver.

**We are distinctive in the high quality of education we provide.**



We have high aspirations and encourage students and staff to take advantage of the opportunities on offer.

**We aim high.**



Our schools are accessible and inclusive, providing opportunities for our students and staff to thrive regardless of their background.

**We are accessible.**



People's wellbeing and growth is at the centre of all we do, and we take seriously our environmental responsibilities.

**We make a positive contribution to individuals and society.**



The diversity of our schools is a key strength, and we work together to make a difference.

**We achieve more together.**



Our actions are driven by doing the right thing at all times, and we take responsibility for them.

**We are open and honest.**

.....  
**THREE  
STRATEGIC  
PILLARS**  
.....



# Future plans

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Our future priorities remain firmly rooted in the Foundation's existing strategic pillars, which detail our long-term objectives.



## **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1 (S01):**

*Learning with us*



## **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2 (S02):**

*Working with us*



## **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3 (S03):**

*Partnering with us*



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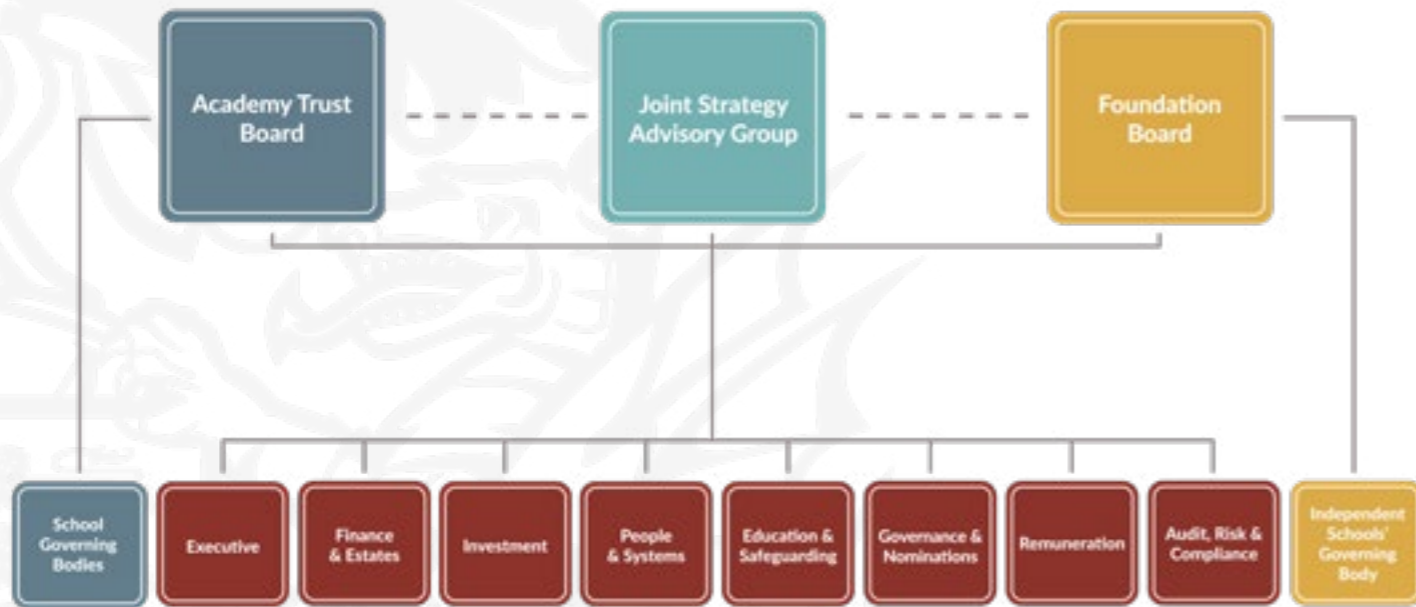
# A unified vision for the future

Following recent feedback from the Foundation's stakeholders, seven priorities for development and seven priorities to enable them were identified. These will form a major part of activity for the next five years.

Development priorities		Enabling priorities	
DP1	SEND Hub	EP1	Financial plan
DP2	Inter-school student collaboration	EP2	Organisational structure & culture
DP3	Post-16 provision	EP3	Governance & delegations
DP4	Primary alliances	EP4	Advancement strategy
DP5	Parental engagement	EP5	Digital unification
DP6	Centre of excellence	EP6	Data
DP7	Edgbaston masterplan	EP7	AI



# Governance & leadership



Although two separate entities, the Foundation Charity and Academy Trust have aligned their governance. Governors and Trustees meet together in joint advisory groups prior to Board and Committee meetings, allowing a unified strategic approach and shared understanding for the whole organisation. This is replicated at the executive level.



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## Executive Team





## Key stakeholders

Joint Strategy Advisory Group (Foundation Board and Academy Trust Board)	Ofsted & ISI
Executive Joint Advisory Group and Committees	Birmingham City Council & West Midlands Combined Authority
Foundation Education Group	Birmingham MAT Leaders Network
School Governing Body Chairs	Education Exchange West Midlands
Department for Education (DfE) Regions Group West Midlands	Donors, sponsors and charities

### *Accountabilities*

The CEO is accountable to the Board of Trustees of the Foundation for ensuring there is a shared vision, for the development and implementation of the Foundation's strategy to realise the vision, and for the effective leadership of the organisation's operations.

The CEO reports directly to the Chair of the Foundation Board. The Foundation's operating powers are formally delegated to the CEO through a scheme of delegation. The Chief Executive is also the Academy Trust's Accounting Officer and hence has a close, formal relationship with the Chair of the Academy Trust.

The Chief Executive is assisted by an Executive team, each in a significant leadership role with their own portfolio of responsibility.

The Academy Heads are primarily accountable to a Cluster Lead. There are three Cluster Leads who sit on the Executive team, representing each of the clusters: northern, central and southern.

Each Academy has a School Governing Body (SGB). The Chair of the SGB works alongside the Headteacher and Cluster Lead to ensure the school's success.

The CEO works in partnership with the Chief Master & Principal of the Independent Schools and the Chair of the Independent Schools' Governing Body.

# The role

The CEO will oversee a broad portfolio of activities focused on six key priorities:

- Inspirational leadership
- Maximising the outcomes and experience of students
- Effective financial and risk management
- Collaborative organisational development
- Strong governance
- Influential ambassadorship

## *Key priority: inspirational leadership*

- Set and articulate a clear, long-term vision for the Foundation, proactively engaging with all stakeholders, translating strategy into action.
- Provide leadership and direction in the implementation of the Foundation's strategy and the promotion of its charitable purpose, culture, and values.
- Through authoritative leadership, ensure a clear balance of alignment and autonomy across the Foundation's schools, ensuring quality and integration and that schools continue to subscribe to a one-organisation ethos.
- With clear accountabilities, lead the Executive team, providing appropriate challenge and motivation and holding colleagues to account.
- Foster an inclusive culture and environment of trust, accountability and collaboration, developing strong partnerships across schools and the central team.

## *Key priority: maximising the outcomes and experience of students*

- With the Headmaster of the Foundation, Director of Education, Cluster Leads and Headteachers, shape and deliver educational strategy for the Foundation.
- Ensure commitment to the highest standards of safeguarding and compliance across every aspect of the organisation.
- Through a sustainable growth strategy, continue to expand the Academy Trust in line with the mission of the Foundation to ensure high-quality educational provision is offered to more Birmingham children.
- Ensure a range of educational data is regularly presented to Boards to help inform actions and decisions.
- Identify opportunities and risks presented by the changing nature of the educational landscape in the UK.
- Contribute to the wider national debate on enhancing life chances for children through education.
- Be a champion for all the different types of schooling the Foundation offers and be committed to the sustainable growth of the Academy Trust.



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## *Key priority: influential ambassadorship*

- Form relationships at the highest level with major governmental, political, civic, business and educational organisations.
- With the Development team, drive forward a philanthropic culture, participating in fundraising activities and donor cultivation.
- Be visible across all our schools, communicating in a clear and targeted fashion to the wide diversity of Foundation stakeholders to ensure they understand the key messages about the Foundation's purpose, direction, areas of change and priorities.
- Represent the Foundation locally, regionally and, in particular, nationally, promoting its mission, identity, values and success and exploiting networking opportunities.



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### *Key priority: strong governance*

- Work closely with the Foundation Chair to ensure governance structures and operations are effective and support the vision.
- Develop productive relationships with Governors, providing timely information and advice to enable them to exercise their responsibilities and ensure decisions are well-informed, clear and implemented.
- Ensure the Foundation meets all statutory and regulatory requirements and requests for information as required by the DfE and the Charity Commission.
- Demonstrate high ethical standards of conduct in line with the seven principles of public life (the Nolan Principles) and the Ethical Leadership Framework for Education.

# *The role - continued*

### *Key priority: effective financial and risk management*

- Be accountable to the Board of Trustees for the fulfilment and control of the Foundation's annual budget.
- Continue to protect the Foundation's long-term financial sustainability and organisational resilience through effective utilisation of the Foundation's various assets and grow the capital endowment in real terms.
- Provide effective stewardship of the Foundation's and schools' assets, for example, reviewing investment strategy, careful development of the estate of all schools and ensuring robust financial plans and controls are in place across the Foundation and that annual budgets for the Foundation itself are well prepared and adhered to.
- Work with schools and the central team on the investment and delivery of increasingly efficient and effective professional services which generate economies of scale and meet set key performance indicators.
- Identify and realise commercial opportunities across the Foundation.
- Direct financial planning and control in accordance with the DfE, the Charity Commission and accounting good practice.
- Recognise and manage risks facing the organisation and implement strategies to reduce their impact.

### *Key priority: collaborative and effective organisational development*

- Inspire, motivate and lead the people across the Foundation, ensuring morale is high and that the Foundation's values and behaviours are visible and upheld in all corners of the organisation.
- Through visibility across the Foundation, encourage others to be ambitious for the Foundation, creating opportunities for high-quality and high-impact professional development and growth.
- With Executive leaders, ensure modern professional services structures and teams are aligned with strategic priorities and a first-rate educational experience, supported by an efficient target operating model.
- Build staff capacity and capability to navigate and deliver transformational change, innovation and organisational flexibility, mentoring leaders to implement change in a politically astute and focused style.

# The individual

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We do not expect every candidate to display all the desired attributes outlined below. However, we look forward very much to meeting self-aware candidates who can demonstrate much of what we are looking for.

- A strong intellectual visionary leader with the ability to inspire and influence both within and beyond the Foundation.
- A strong affiliation with the Foundation's core values and a deep commitment to the education, development, inclusion and welfare of young people.
- An unshakable commitment to the safeguarding of young people and the highest standards in all matters of compliance.
- A profound contemporary knowledge of cross-sector education issues, outcomes, policy and the political environment.
- Experienced in running complex organisations or portfolios, at scale, with accountability for substantial resources – financial, human, and physical – displaying evidence of commercial awareness and sound financial management.
- Evidence of leading, delivering and embedding transformational change in large and complex organisations with credibility, transparency and sensitivity.
- Evidence of successfully driving high performance across an executive or senior leadership team, demonstrating clear accountability with strong delegation.
- Evidence of successfully navigating economic pressures, regulatory change and digital disruption in a similar environment.
- A respectful and confident leader who can lead through challenge, opportunity and uncertainty, harnessing the organisation's collective thinking and talent to support the mission and ensure long-term resilience.
- Successful engagement and influence with major organisations and individuals – governmental, political, civic, financial, educational, donors and the media.
- Evidence of bringing diverse groups together to unite around a common purpose.
- Able to work through challenges, confidently take difficult decisions and exercise sound judgement with resilience, diplomacy and emotional stability, seeking advice and opinions when necessary.
- Demonstrated success working with boards and complex governance structures, with a detailed knowledge of regulatory frameworks and best practice in governance.



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# Terms and conditions

- An attractive salary commensurate with executive leadership experience.
- Membership of a defined contribution scheme (currently 12% employer contribution).
- 40 days' annual leave (inclusive of public holidays).
- The post holder will be required to attend evening meetings and travel locally and nationally.
- A hybrid approach to working is in place. As this is a senior role, you will be expected to spend the majority of your time in the office and in our schools.
- Private health membership (Bupa).
- Funded executive-level CPD.
- Employee assistance programme (EAP).
- Cycle-to-work scheme.
- Free lunch.
- Free onsite parking.

The Foundation is an inclusive organisation, building a culture where differences are valued and believing that diversity drives continual improvement and success.

The Foundation is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, and applicants must be willing to undergo child protection screening appropriate to the post, including checks with past employers and the enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service.



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# Application process

Interested candidates are invited to contact RSAcademics to arrange a confidential discussion with the consultant handling this appointment:

- Sarah Glencross, Head of Senior School Search: [sarahglencross@rsacademics.com](mailto:sarahglencross@rsacademics.com)

**Closing date: 10.00am UK time on Monday 27th April 2026.**

Applications should be made electronically to RSAcademics. To submit your application, please upload your documents according to the instructions on the RSAcademics [website](#).

You should submit the following (both in PDF format):

- A completed application form (available alongside this candidate information on the RSAcademics [website](#)).
- A covering letter addressed to Erica Conway, incoming Chair of the Foundation. The letter should explain your reasons for applying.

If you have any questions about uploading your application documents, please contact:

- Jonathan Barnes, Head of Operations (Leadership Appointments):  
[applications@rsacademics.com](mailto:applications@rsacademics.com) /+44 (0) 204 6269 791

We understand the need for confidentiality, and all discussions and interviews will be handled with very careful regard to this.

The process is as follows:

- All applications will be acknowledged by email. If you have not received acknowledgement that your application has been received within two working days of sending it, please contact RSAcademics by telephone.
- **Preliminary interviews** will take place with RSAcademics via MS Teams during the week commencing 4th May 2026.
- **Longlist interviews** will take place online via MS Teams on Tuesday 19th May 2026.
- Selected candidates will be invited to visit the Foundation on Tuesday 2nd June 2026.
- **Final interviews** will take place in person on Monday 8th June 2026 (location to be confirmed).

**N.B. Safer recruitment checks will be made at all stages in the recruitment process.**

RS Academics is a global executive search and consultancy firm working exclusively with schools. For more than 20 years, we've supported governors and leaders at pivotal moments – whether they are appointing senior staff or making complex strategic decisions.

What makes us distinctive is the depth of first-hand experience in schools across our team – as heads, governors, bursars and senior professionals – combined with specialist expertise in areas such as strategy, research, marketing and finance. This blend is continually enriched by our ongoing consultancy and appointments work with schools worldwide, so our



Because the world needs schools to [thrive](#)

