

**FORTIS TRUST**  
STRENGTH IN PARTNERSHIP

# Director of Educational Excellence and Improvement

Salary: Negotiable depending on experience

Full Time Permanent

Required: September 2026 or January 2027

Closing Date: 17<sup>th</sup> April 2026

Shortlisting: 20<sup>th</sup> April 2026

Interviews: 27<sup>th</sup> April 2026

## CANDIDATE INFORMATION PACK



Bradfields Academy,  
Churchill Avenue, Kent ME5 0LB



FORWARD2EMPLOYMENT

Forward2Employment, Unit E3,  
Knight Rd, Rochester,  
Kent ME2 2LS



**FORTIS TRUST**  
OUTREACH SERVICE

Fortis Outreach, C/O, Bradfields  
Academy, Churchill Avenue,  
Kent ME5 0LB



# INTRODUCTION

## From the Chief Executive Officer

Dear Applicant

At Fortis Trust, young people are at the heart of everything we do. As a family of collaborative and innovative academies and provisions, we are united by our commitment to improving the achievements and life chances of the young people, families, and communities we serve. Our strength lies in partnership within our Trust and beyond and in our shared focus on delivering the very best learning experiences as we as we pursue excellence.

We are highly ambitious to make the right decisions in the interest of the young people we serve and for all adults across our organisation. Our ambition is system-wide. We form collaborative partnerships where best practice is developed, harnessed, and shared for the betterment of all—never through a one-size-fits-all model, but by celebrating the distinct character of each academy and provision, using the power of a supportive network to deliver the very best learning experiences for every child, and young person.

We achieve this by aligning all learning opportunities to our Framework for Excellent Practice and by ensuring that staff at every level know, recognise, and use it in their day-to-day work. The framework's principles: Everybody's Best, Depth & Breadth of Knowledge, Character Identity, Leadership from Everybody, and Desire to Innovate & Improve; shape our Quality Assurance and drive consistent, high-impact improvement across curriculum, pedagogy, outcomes, attendance, transition, character, behaviour, pastoral support, citizenship, and careers.

Beyond our Trust, we lead and learn with others. Through Fortis Outreach, we share expertise and best practice, supporting nursery, primary, and secondary settings across Medway and Kent. Additionally, we establish intentional partnerships with local schools, charities, advisory networks and with employers through Forward2Employment, so that improvement is system-led, sustainable, and focused on what works.

As an experienced and inspiring leader, as our Director of Educational Excellence and Improvement you will be pivotal in shaping the next phase of Fortis Trust's journey. We are entering a period of rapid and exciting growth, with plans that include the potential development of a new free school, a major rebuild for Bradfields Academy, the expansion of Forward2Employment, the transfer of two new academies into the Trust, and the addition of a mainstream infant school within the coming year.

In this dynamic context, you will serve as the Trust's strategic lead for educational standards and the quality of teaching and learning; championing our Framework for Excellent Practice and ensuring the coherent, high-impact implementation of our Quality Assurance Framework across all academies and provisions. Your leadership will be instrumental in securing outstanding outcomes for our young people and communities as we continue to expand and innovate.

You will:

- Maintain a relentless focus on educational standards, ensuring every classroom delivers ambitious, inclusive, and evidence-informed teaching and learning.
- Lead Quality Assurance and Improvement meetings with Principals, using robust evidence to challenge, support, and drive improvement.
- Establish and lead subject enhancement and development networks, fostering collaboration and the sharing of best practice.
- Act as deputy to the CEO when required, providing executive leadership and representing the Trust with Trustees, regulators and external partners to ensure continuity of performance, risk management and statutory compliance.
- Oversee the planning and delivery of Trust-wide INSET days, ensuring professional development is sharply focused on improving teaching, learning, and leadership.
- Support leaders to be Ofsted ready, including acting as Ofsted Nominee and ensuring robust preparation for inspection.
- Work in partnership with the CEO to lead the PTI Primary Hub, raising standards and deepening professional learning.
- Oversee the Trust's Careers & Professional Development Lead to ensure Careers Education and CPD are impactful, and support the shaping of staff career pathways across the Trust.

In return, you will join a Trust that values clarity, professionalism, and integrity, and offers rich opportunities for system leadership, coaching, and collaborative networks. In addition, we offer a comprehensive package of staff benefits including Salary sacrifice schemes such as cycle to work scheme. You will have access to high-quality professional development and leadership pathways, and the chance to make a lasting impact on the lives of young people and staff across the region.

We are driven by a passion to do our very best for young people and staff. By working together, we achieve what none of us could achieve alone—raising aspirations, improving life chances, and enabling every learner to take full and active, responsible roles in their communities and beyond. If you share this vision and have the expertise to lead standards and teaching quality at scale, we would love to hear from you.

For a confidential discussion about the role, please contact Marie Sweetlove-Smyth, CEO (via [louise.tombs@fortistrust.co.uk](mailto:louise.tombs@fortistrust.co.uk))

Yours sincerely



Marie Sweetlove-Smyth  
Chief Executive Officer

# Director of Educational Excellence & Improvement

## Job Description

**Responsible to:**  
Chief Executive

### Job Purpose

The Director of Educational Excellence and Improvement is the Trust's strategic lead for educational standards and the quality of teaching and learning.

As a key member of the Executive Team, the role champions the Fortis Framework for Excellent Practice and leads the implementation of the Quality Assurance Framework to secure consistently high-quality, inclusive education across all academies and provisions.

Working with the CEO and senior leaders, the Director sets ambitious priorities, evaluates impact and ensures sustained improvement through an effective balance of challenge, support and professional development.

The role ensures strong leadership and high standards across the Trust, deputising for the CEO when required and providing continuity of strategic leadership in line with Trust priorities and Board direction.

### Main Responsibilities

The following list is typical of the level of duties, which the post holder will be expected to perform. It is not necessarily exhaustive and other duties of a similar type and level may be required from time to time.

### Key Accountabilities

- Promote the Trust's values and vision to guide all decisions and strategic direction.
- Develop and communicate clear improvement strategies, ensuring alignment across academies and governing bodies.
- Lead the Excellence Team, challenging and supporting Principals to drive sustained improvement.
- Motivate, coach, and mentor senior and middle leaders to build a positive, collaborative culture.
- Ensure Trust-wide planning reflects the diversity and unique context of each academy and its community.
- Contribute to the development and implementation of Trust policies and procedures.
- Champion the Fortis Framework for Excellent Practice and lead the ongoing development of the Quality Assurance Framework.
- Set and uphold high expectations for educational standards, teaching, and learning.
- Drive continuous improvement through self-evaluation, data analysis, and effective school improvement strategies.
- Lead regular Quality Assurance meetings with Principals to ensure accountability and support.
- Establish and lead subject development networks to foster collaboration and share best practice.

# JOB DESCRIPTION

## Performance outcomes

- Provide strategic leadership for all Trust academies and provisions.
- Present accurate performance analysis to the Trust Board.
- Identify development areas and ensure rigorous Academy Improvement Plans are implemented.
- Promote the highest standards of achievement and well-being for young people.
- Be accountable for performance outcomes aligned with Improvement Plans and the Trust's Strategic Plan.
- Lead robust quality assurance cycles, ensuring principles of the Framework for Excellent Practice are enacted and evidenced.
- Deliver accurate, timely reports to the CEO, Trust Board, and committees on educational standards and improvement.
- Ensure accountability processes are fair, consistent, and focused on continuous improvement.

## Raising Education Standards & Quality of Teaching & Learning

- Set and uphold the highest educational standards, ensuring consistently excellent teaching and learning across all academies and provisions.
- Work with the CEO, Executive Team, and Principals to foster a collaborative culture that shares best practice, celebrates success, and drives accountability for outcomes.
- Design and implement a collaborative leadership model, ensuring alignment across schools and rigorous monitoring of progress.
- Promote innovation through enquiry-led practice, adapting provision to meet changing needs and government requirements.
- Lead and review the Trust's Quality Assurance Framework, focusing on classroom practice, curriculum intent and impact, and student outcomes.
- Hold regular Quality Assurance meetings with Principals, using evidence to challenge, support, and drive improvement.
- Establish and quality assure subject development networks to foster collaboration and share best practice.
- Enable leaders to create a safe, supportive culture where young people achieve their full potential.
- Oversee INSET planning and delivery, ensuring professional development improves teaching, learning, and leadership.
- Support Ofsted readiness, act as Ofsted Nominee, and ensure robust inspection preparation.
- Co-lead the PTI Primary Hub with the CEO to maintain high standards in primary education and professional development.
- Oversee Careers Education and CPD to ensure they are impactful, evidence-based, and aligned with the Framework for Excellent Practice.
- Shape staff career pathways to provide personalized development and leadership growth.
- Build strong partnerships with parents and the wider community to enhance achievement and development.
- Promote the Trust's reputation locally, regionally, and nationally.
- Ensure high-quality provision for all young people.

# JOB DESCRIPTION

## Fortis Quality Assurance Framework

The Director of Educational Excellence and Improvement is jointly responsible with the CEO for the development, implementation and review of the Fortis Quality Assurance Framework. This framework spans education, workforce, finance and operations, governance and leadership.

When deputising for the CEO, the Director is delegated authority to oversee all quality assurance domains to maintain strategic, assurance, operational and statutory assurance.

## Training, Safeguarding & Compliance

Maintain up-to-date knowledge and skills through regular training, including annual safeguarding, FGM, Prevent, and other mandatory courses.

Pursue relevant qualifications and professional development, engage in regional and national networks, and prepare for Ofsted inspections.

Support continuous learning across the Trust and serve as Team Leader for Performance Management when required.

Uphold the Trust's commitment to safeguarding and health and safety, ensuring best practice and strict adherence to all safeguarding and reporting procedures.

## Leadership, Collaboration, and System Improvement

- Plan strategically and monitor progress toward Trust aims, working with staff to secure excellent outcomes for all.
- Ensure rigorous, fair, and transparent performance management systems that identify development needs and celebrate excellence.
- Apply organisational values consistently to drive improvement processes.
- Monitor leadership, management, and teaching quality to identify areas for improvement.
- Enable all staff to perform at the highest standard through high-quality professional development.
- Contribute to the Trust Strategic Improvement & Development Plan and set ambitious targets with the CEO.
- Oversee and quality assure the Outreach Team's work, ensuring system-led improvement and impactful external collaboration.
- Work with the Director of Safeguarding to deliver education programmes promoting safety and wellbeing.
- Recognise and nurture leadership in students, staff, families, and stakeholders; empower all adults to lead with integrity and care.
- Develop teams and create space for distributed leadership, fostering collaboration, confidence, and diversity.
- Monitor workload and implement wellbeing initiatives to support work-life balance.
- Secure commitment from staff, pupils, parents, and the wider community to the Trust's vision and direction.
- Promote policies that encourage mutual tolerance and respect for diversity in employment and service delivery.
- Ensure organisational structures and operational models are fit for purpose and enable continuous improvement.
- Manage talent effectively through CPD, succession planning, leadership development, and recruitment strategies.
- Guide the Trust through sector changes, including curriculum and accountability frameworks.
- Oversee school-to-school support and work with external improvement partners for continual progress.
- Maintain a robust monitoring and evaluation cycle, providing formal half-termly reports to the CEO.

# JOB DESCRIPTION

## Communication & Consultation

Communicate the Trust's mission, values, and policies to all stakeholders while setting ambitious standards for students and staff.

Hold leaders accountable for excellence and support improvement across academies, reporting regularly to Trustees on progress and impact.

Build strong relationships with local authorities, regulators, government, other MATs, and sector leaders, and liaise effectively with central staff and external professionals.

Promote positive public relations within the community and lead training sessions, briefings, and events as required.

## Relationships & Supervision

Strategically lead and support Leadership Teams across the Trust, fostering positive relationships and accountability for educational quality and improvement.

Provide regular updates to the CEO, oversee key roles including Careers and CPD Lead, Head of Outreach, and Principals, and maintain strong partnerships with staff, parents, governors, and external agencies.

Promote goodwill and positive public relations, ensure alignment with CEO direction, and develop impact reports for stakeholders. Participate in performance management processes while championing equality, diversity, and inclusive practices.

## Depth & Breadth of Knowledge and Innovation

- Champion Fortis Trust's principles of Excellent Practice and continuous improvement.
- Lead contemporary, sustained school improvement initiatives.
- Monitor standards against curriculum and Trust frameworks, ensuring swift, effective action with measurable impact.
- Ensure the curriculum provides subject-based learning, talent development, and understanding of work and community.
- Promote inspiring teaching that fosters deep understanding and intellectual curiosity.
- Support staff development through high-quality CPD, advanced qualifications, and research opportunities.
- Cultivate a culture of high aspirations and challenge for all members of the Trust.
- Seek and implement innovative ideas for improvement from internal and external sources.
- Use evidence rigorously to evaluate impact, refining or discontinuing initiatives as needed.
- Ensure compliance with statutory duties, including the SEND Code of Practice.

## Qualities and Knowledge

- Embody the principles of the Fortis Framework for Excellent Practice.
- Lead by example, demonstrating clear values, moral purpose, and professional integrity.
- Exhibit depth and breadth of educational knowledge, character, and leadership.
- Model innovation and continuous improvement with high ethical standards.
- Build positive relationships, act with care, and set high expectations for self and others.
- Stay informed on educational developments locally, nationally, and globally.
- Translate national policy into Trust practice with political and financial awareness.
- Maintain expertise in examination boards, qualifications, assessment, and reporting across all key stages.
- Ensure exemplary systems for managing academic data.



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# Director of Educational Excellence & Improvement: Person Specification

## Application Stage

The following criteria (experience, skills and qualifications) will be used to short-list at the application stage:

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Degree-level qualification in education or related field</li> <li>Qualified Teacher Status (QTS)</li> <li>A valid driving license and means of transport</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Postgraduate qualification (e.g., NPQEL, Master's)</li> </ul>
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Significant experience as a leader with a sustained record of school improvement and raising standards</li> <li>Experience in curriculum design, development, and implementation</li> <li>Experience in quality assurance of teaching and learning</li> <li>Experience of leading Ofsted preparation and inspections</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Experience as an Ofsted Inspector or Senior Leadership position</li> <li>Experience in a Multi-Academy Trust leadership role</li> <li>Experience of system-led improvement and outreach</li> </ul>
Knowledge & Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deep understanding of curriculum development, pedagogy, and assessment across all key stages</li> <li>Understanding of strategic planning processes in building school improvement</li> <li>Expertise in school improvement strategies and frameworks</li> <li>Strong knowledge of quality assurance processes for teaching and learning</li> <li>Ability to interpret and apply national policy in a local context</li> <li>Excellent communication and interpersonal skills</li> <li>Knowledge of ways to build, communicate and implement a shared vision and ability to deliver this</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Knowledge of national and global educational developments</li> <li>Financial and political astuteness</li> </ul>
Leadership & Personal Qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ability to inspire and motivate teams</li> <li>High professional integrity and moral purpose</li> <li>Commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion</li> <li>Capacity to build strong partnerships internally and externally</li> <li>Ability to challenge, give feedback and present views to achieve positive outcomes</li> <li>Highly organised and flexible</li> <li>Personally resilient, self-aware and willing to learn and to adapt</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of innovation and thought leadership in education</li> <li>Engagement in regional or national networks</li> </ul>
Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commitment to continuous professional development</li> <li>Ability to lead CPD and talent development across the Trust</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research experience or published educational work</li> </ul>

## Application Stage

The following criteria must be judged as satisfactory when pre-employment checks are completed:

### Essential

- 1 Enhanced Certificate of Disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service\*

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- 2 Additional criminal record checks if applicant has lived outside the UK

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- 3 Children's Barred List Check\*

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- 4 DfE Prohibition List Check including GTCE Check

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- 5 Confirmation of Qualifications and Qualified Teacher Status, including confirmation of professional status from relevant professional regulatory body for teachers who have worked overseas

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- 6 Medical clearance

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- 7 A minimum of two satisfactory references from current and previous employers (or education establishment if applicant not in employment).

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- 8 A Section 128 Education and Skills Act Prohibition from Management list check.

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\*All posts involving direct contact with vulnerable children are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. The amendments to the Exceptions Order 1975 (2013 and 2020) provide that certain spent convictions and cautions are 'protected'. These are not subject to disclosure to employers and cannot be taken into account. Guidance and criteria on the filtering of these cautions and convictions can be found on the Ministry of Justice website [www.gov.uk/government/publications/new-guidance-on-the-rehabilitation-of-offenders-act-1974](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/new-guidance-on-the-rehabilitation-of-offenders-act-1974).

This post is classed as being in 'Regulated Activity' as defined in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021, therefore in addition to the DBS check, a check of the Children's Barred List will also be conducted as part of the pre-employment screening process.

### Assessment/Selection Methods

Candidates will be assessed during an interview process comprising several activities, which may include panel interviews, written tasks and a presentation.

### How to Apply

Applications must be made using the Fortis Trust application form. Your personal statement **must** say, in no more than two sides of A4, in succinct format why you think you are the person we need and provide verifiable evidence of your experience, skills, abilities and knowledge. Your application should include full contact details: address, daytime, home, and mobile telephone numbers. where applicable and email addresses) and details of 2 referees. For each referee please provide their name, position, organisation, telephone numbers and email addresses where known.

One of these referees must be your current or most recent employer. If you do not wish us to contact referees at this stage, please make this clear. Please send your completed application to: [louise.tombs@fortistrust.co.uk](mailto:louise.tombs@fortistrust.co.uk)

Fortis Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

The successful candidate will be subject to all necessary pre-employment checks, including enhanced DBS, prohibition check, qualifications (where applicable), medical fitness, identity and right to work. All applicants will be required to provide two suitable references which will be sought prior to interview. Fortis Trust is an equal opportunities employer.

# About our Trust

## **Strength through partnership**

Through collaboration and partnership we believe that all schools and provisions can be their very best, providing their communities with compassionate and equitable cultures, aspirational curriculums and inspiring and innovative learning approaches and wider opportunities. Through our partnerships, we strive to work collaboratively to enable all young people to be fully prepared for their next stage in life, whether it is onto the next stage in education or preparing for employment.

Children and young people need and deserve the right start in life academically, socially and emotionally whatever stage of their educational journey. We strive to develop the character of everybody involved in the trust, through challenge and support for improvement and development. We aim to bring out the best in everybody. Staff at all levels are supported in their roles and to prepare for their next steps through personalised development opportunities and excellent professional learning training days and programmes.

We do not work in isolation. We know that our 'strength through partnership' must go beyond our trust. Therefore, we work beyond our Trust with local schools, the community, local charities, local employers and local and national advisory networks. In addition, we work more broadly across the region and system, so that we can learn from each other, harness best practice, access the latest research, and secure the expertise of those beyond the school system who share our values.

## **Our Mission**

***Fortis Trust exists to work together to make a positive global difference for all through collaboration and innovation.***

## **Our Values**

Our values underpin all of the work we do and form the basis our framework for Excellent Practice.

### **Aspiration & Growth**



We support Trust members at all levels, including students, interns, staff, parents/carers or stakeholders to be their best. We focus on raising aspirations and enabling growth to prepare everybody successfully for their next stage in life.

### **Identity & Diversity**



We strongly believe that differences make our communities interesting and innovative. Our diversity gives us strength. We value and celebrate identity and diversity.

### **Collaborative Partnerships**



We believe that collaborative partnerships are vital in all aspects of our Trust's development. Through collaboration, we are able to be innovative; harnessing skills, knowledge and talents across our Trust for the betterment of all.

### **Innovation for Improvement**



We believe that everybody can continue to improve and develop to be their best and enable others to be their best. We value new ideas and practices and continuously review existing practice. We believe there is no limit to what we can achieve and that we can always be better.

# Our Academy, Provision & Services

Established in 2014, Fortis Trust comprises Bradfields Academy, a specialist SEND school for ages 4–19 years (PAN: 444) students; Forward2Employment, a post-16 provision (16-24 years) offering supported internships and employment pathways (PAN 50); and Fortis Outreach, which provides expert SEND support and training to schools across Medway and Kent. Together, these academies and services deliver high-quality education, care, and guidance, ensuring every learner can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally while preparing for successful futures in education, employment, and independent living. We are undertaking a journey of growth with two academies in Southend joining the Trust in April/May, and a mainstream Infants School joining May/June.

## Bradfields Academy



Bradfields Academy is an innovative specialist SEND provision for students aged 4–19 with complex learning needs, including speech, language, sensory, physical, and autistic spectrum conditions. Recognised as a centre of excellence, Bradfields has achieved consecutive Outstanding Ofsted judgements and prides itself on delivering a personalised curriculum that combines academic achievement with social and emotional development. Students access a broad range of qualifications, from Entry Level to GCSE and BTEC, alongside enrichment opportunities that build confidence and independence. With a strong pastoral programme and highly skilled staff, Bradfields ensures every learner is supported to flourish and become an active, responsible member of their community and beyond.

[www.bradfieldsacademy.co.uk](http://www.bradfieldsacademy.co.uk)

## Forward2Employment



Forward2Employment supports young people aged 16–24 with SEND to gain meaningful employment through Supported Internships and tailored workplace training. Working closely with local businesses, Forward2Employment offers structured programmes that combine real-world experience with employability skills and qualifications. Interns spend most of their time in the workplace, supported by dedicated job coaches who help them develop confidence, independence, and practical skills. The service also provides Supported Employment for adults with additional needs, ensuring long-term success in the workplace. Rated highly by national bodies, Forward2Employment transforms aspirations into reality, empowering individuals to secure purposeful careers and contribute positively to their communities.

[www.forward2employment.co.uk](http://www.forward2employment.co.uk)

## Fortis Outreach

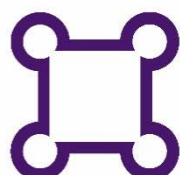


Fortis Outreach delivers specialist SEND support, advice, and training to schools and professionals across Medway and Kent. This service works in partnership with local authorities and education providers to improve inclusive practice and raise standards for learners with additional needs. Outreach specialists offer bespoke guidance on curriculum adaptation, behaviour strategies, and staff development, ensuring mainstream and special settings can meet diverse needs effectively. Through workshops, coaching, and consultancy, Fortis Outreach helps schools build capacity, confidence, and expertise in SEND provision. By sharing best practice and fostering collaboration, the service plays a vital role in driving system-led improvement and enhancing outcomes for children and young people.

<https://fortistrust.co.uk/our-services/fortis-trust-outreach-service/>

### **Application Process**

If you feel, you have the experience, skills and attributes to succeed as part of our team, please download and complete our application form and return it to [louise.tombs@fortistrust.co.uk](mailto:louise.tombs@fortistrust.co.uk)



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