




# The LETTA Trust

## Guide for Schools Considering Joining the Trust

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<b>Reviewed by:</b>	Trust Board	<b>Signed:</b>	



# The LETTA Trust

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**Chair of Trustees**

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Dear Colleague,

We very much appreciate your interest in The LETTA Trust and would be happy to share everything you need if you are considering joining our family of schools. We enclose this guide which you may find helpful.

We hope that it will quickly become evident that as new schools join, there is a close collaboration process to create a shared vision while encouraging each school to have its own strong identity and creativity.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,

Jo Franklin

CEO

Peter Sherrat

Chair of Trustees



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## 1. Welcome to the LETTA Trust community

LETTA Trust schools are committed to working in partnership and learning from each other. Together we strive to give children the best chance of happiness and success at school and beyond; to growing active citizens with a strong moral compass who will make a positive difference in the world. We are a school trust or multi-academy trust founded on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2017. Our vision is a promise to our pupils; our values determine how we work together.

## 2. Our vision

Our vision is that every child in every school in our trust:

- Loves **learning**, achieves their very best, has fun at school and feels excited about the future
- Knows how to make friends and get along well with **people**; to treat them with fairness, compassion and respect
- Grows **healthy** and strong, believes in themselves and has the confidence and resilience to follow their dreams
- Feels part of their **community**, proud of their school and inspired to make a positive difference in the world

## 3. Our values

Our values determine how we work together:

- **Aspiration:** aiming high; broadening horizons; creating possibilities
- **Innovation:** taking risks; daring to be different; pioneering research; shaping the future; leading the way
- **Equality:** inclusive; excellence for all; celebrating diversity; all for one and one for all!
- **Generosity:** open doors; collaboration; challenge and support; community-minded; team spirit; Ubuntu

## 4. Ubuntu

Our guiding principle is the philosophy of **Ubuntu**; a southern African philosophy that speaks of our interconnectedness, of the importance of relationships, of openness and generosity to one another.

*“Ubuntu does not mean that people should not enrich themselves. The question is: Are you going to do so in order to enable the community around you to be able to improve?”*

*Nelson Mandela*

*“I am who I am because of who we all are.”*

*Leymah Gbowee*

## 5. Who's who in the LETTA Trust?

**Bygrove Primary School:** <https://bygrove.org.uk/>

Chair of the Local Governing Board: Stuart Poyser

Headteacher: Fiona Durnian

**Stebon Primary School:** <https://stebon.org.uk/>

Chair of the Local Governing Board: Michael Keating

Headteacher: Jeremy Iver

**School improvement team:** <https://letta.org.uk/train/>

Director of school improvement: Ben Sperring

### **Executive leaders:**

Chair of Trustees: Peter Sherratt

Trust Leader (CEO): Jo Franklin

Chief Finance Officer (CFO): Razna Begum

## 6. Joining the LETTA Trust

We have great aspiration for our pupils, our staff and for the community we serve. That means providing the best possible school experience for children and families at our existing schools, but it also means growing, welcoming more schools into our trust, sharing good practice and collaborating in meaningful ways.

The Trust can grow in 3 ways:

- Schools choose to join the Trust – this would strengthen the capacity of the Trust to offer support to schools in challenging circumstances
- The Trust may be asked by the Regional Director to 'sponsor' schools in need of support – we were approved as sponsors by the DfE in January 2017
- The Trust may apply to open a new school in an area of local need

In each case, trustees decide which schools join the Trust; they determine whether welcoming in a new school is in the long term interests of both the Trust and of the new school. Before deciding how to proceed Trustees need to be satisfied that the Trust had the capacity to support an incoming school well without disadvantaging existing schools.

We understand that our strength lies in partnership; being able to facilitate staff working together in a meaningful sense is what will secure future success. All schools need to be able to fully participate. As such schools in the LETTA Trust will be no further than half a lunchtime's (30 minutes) travel from another LETTA school.

## 7. Identity and schools in the LETTA Trust

LETTA schools are equal partners who benefit from the collective advantages of Trust membership and alignment whilst also making sure that each school's identity is firmly rooted

in its local community. Each school retains its own unique character. All schools are encouraged to innovate in terms of curriculum, pedagogy and community engagement. Incoming schools enjoy the same autonomy by default where they have financial stability and pupil outcomes are good. If a school joins the Trust due to a period of instability, the school will be closely supported until it is able to provide a good quality education for its pupils and is financially stable.

## **8. LETTA School Improvement Team**

The Trust has strong school improvement capacity and our school improvement team oversees the LETTA SCITT, LETTA's apprenticeship provision, our ECT programme, leadership programmes and other training courses. The purpose of the School Improvement Team is to provide every staff member the very best learning and development opportunities at every stage in their career. School improvement opportunities include:

- School based ITE programme
- Access to a wide range of apprenticeships
- Bespoke school improvement partner support from the CEO and/or a Local Leader of Education (LLE)
- Leadership support in specific aspects of pedagogy or curriculum areas
- Peer review programme for schools
- Staff training courses for teachers and support staff
- Leadership development training including; the nationally recognised qualifications, coaching and mentoring qualifications, bespoke middle leaders training programmes and action learning groups for Headteachers, Deputy and Assistant Headteachers
- ECT programme
- Staff training courses for teachers and support staff
- Cross-school subject leader networks
- Cross-school moderation events
- Research opportunities
- Opportunities to deliver training, share practice and mentor other professionals
- Additional consultant support and resources as required

## **9. Trust school business support**

The LETTA Trust's central operations team provide each school with the following so that there is no duplication of work and we can make the most of savings and efficiencies:

- Finance including all academy finance requirements
- HR management and support
- Premises management including health and safety reviews
- Identifying collective savings including bulk purchasing of resources
- Income generation including fundraising
- Updating of statutory policies
- Safeguarding audit
- Support and guidance to complete the process of academisation

## 10. Policies

The Trust Board provides each school with a set of statutory policies. These are kept up to date with the latest legislation and best practice guidance by the Trust Leader. Some of these policies require a section of school specific information to reflect local practice and need. They include:

- Child protection and safeguarding policies
- Finance including charging and remissions
- HR statutory policies
- Health and safety policies
- Complaints procedure
- Equalities information and objectives

Each school and its Local Governing Board may choose to develop and adopt other policies that reflect the school's character and guide practice at the school. These are non-statutory policies and could include:

- Teaching and learning
- Assessment
- Curriculum
- Subjects area policies
- Trips
- Parental engagement
- School uniform
- Homework

## 11. Before joining a school trust

- Take a look at the CST's suite of documents relating to joining a school trust <https://cstuk.org.uk/knowledge/joining-a-trust>
- See NGA guidance paper 'Staying in Control of your School's Destiny: joining a multi-academy trust' [https://www.bdes.org.uk/uploads/7/2/8/5/72851667/ngaguidance-paper\\_staying-in-control-of-your-schools-destiny-joining-a-mat\\_nov-2016.pdf](https://www.bdes.org.uk/uploads/7/2/8/5/72851667/ngaguidance-paper_staying-in-control-of-your-schools-destiny-joining-a-mat_nov-2016.pdf)
- Spend time deciding what your non-negotiables are; the dealmakers or deal-breakers
- Be clear about your vision, values and ethos so you can be sure they align with the Trust you choose
- Consider the size, capacity and geography of the Trust
- Evaluate the Trust's capacity to provide effective challenge and support
- Leaders and governors could meet the Trust Leader (CEO) to find out first-hand about the Trust and ask questions
- Leaders and governors could also visit schools in the Trust and meet other members of staff to see the vision and values in action
- A governor could attend some governance meetings
- Governors write to The LETTA Trust Board to ask to join the Trust
- Governors name The LETTA Trust on the school's application to the DfE for permission to convert to academy status

## 12. The due diligence process

Before agreeing to a request for a new school to join the Trust, trustees carry out a due diligence process. This process includes looking at:

- Pupil outcomes information
- Leadership and governance
- Views of staff, parents and the local community
- Financial position
- Asset condition
- Other risks and mitigating factors

## 13. Key documents

- The LETTA Trust Articles of Association
- Scheme of delegation which includes financial procedures
- Master funding agreement produced by the DfE
- Supplementary funding agreements for each school produced by the DfE
- Audited accounts
- Academy Trust Handbook
- Due diligence document
- Minutes of Trust Board and Committee meetings

Further information is available on our Trust and school websites <https://www.letta.org.uk/>

## 14. Contact us

If you are interested in join The LETTA Trust or you know a school that might be, contact us and arrange a visit:

- **0203 405 1120** and ask for Rabea Begum
- Or email [trust@letta.org.uk](mailto:trust@letta.org.uk)