

# Internal Scrutiny



**UNITY**  
SCHOOL SERVICES

School Business Consultants

# Introduction

Unity School Services is a team of highly qualified and experienced consultants to deliver exceptional support to academies and MATs. Every consultant has held senior leadership roles within academies, equipping them with the expertise to offer perceptive insights and practical, actionable advice for improving practices in schools.

We look forward to working with you!

The Unity School Services Team





# About Us

**Unity School Services** was set up by experienced school business leaders with a genuine understanding of the multiple challenges of providing effective school governance and business management. We have over 35 years of combined experience in the education sector, and a thorough knowledge of what is required.

We understand that school leadership can be demanding of school leaders, and we wanted to offer them a service that means we can deal with the operations, while you, the school leader deal with the education of your children.



With a wealth of experience in school business management, we know what is needed to run school business efficiently. We offer a number of business management services that can help with your day to day operations and assist with the long term strategic vision of your school.

Each school is different that's why we offer bespoke services to schools. Your school is unique to your community, so we ensure our services align with your vision, values and ethos. Our processes always have the **children at the heart** of what we do. We want schools to meet the expectations of parents, carers, governors and stakeholders.





# Internal Scrutiny

At Unity School Services, we specialise exclusively in providing internal scrutiny to the academy sector. Our work is carefully tailored to align with the key areas frequently identified in trust risk registers.

We offer a fully bespoke service, designing our internal scrutiny approach around the priorities you highlight. If a specific workflow is not already in place, we will develop one to meet your needs.

Our model is built on the expertise of sector specialists. Many of our consultants and associates are former CFOs of trusts, bringing a deep understanding of both the Academy Accounts Direction and the Academy Trust Handbook.

As part of our service, we begin with an initial planning meeting, included in the overall cost, to ensure we understand your trust and its unique context. During this meeting, we will collaborate with you to develop a tailored internal scrutiny programme, starting from your risk register, or you may choose to use our standard programme.

We provide a comprehensive summary report for the ESFA (as required under section 3.22 of the Academy Trust Handbook) as part of the package. Additionally, we produce detailed reports for your audit and risk committee, celebrating areas of strength while identifying opportunities for improvement.



# Internal Scrutiny

## Scope of Work 2025–26

Our goal is to deliver a high-quality internal scrutiny service that provides valuable insights and assurance to your trustees. This is achieved through the expertise of experienced and knowledgeable sector specialists who understand the unique needs of academy trusts.

The scope of work will be agreed upon in advance and must be approved by the board of directors before the internal scrutiny begins. This will be discussed in detail during the Scrutiny Planning Meeting and formalised in an Internal Scrutiny Plan.



## INTERNAL SCRUTINY

FINANCE					
Section 1: Cash & Bank	Key Areas	Section 2: Procurement	Key Areas	Section 3: Monthly Financial Close down	Key Areas
	Bank Reconciliations Petty Cash Payment Authorisation Cash Flow Management		Value for Money Procurement Processes Purchase Ledger Charge/Purchase Cards Account Signatories & Payments		Funding Reconciliations Accruals Budget Virements Debt Management Petty Cash
HR and Operations					
Section 4: Payroll	Key Areas	Section 6: Administration & Finance System	Key Areas		
	Payroll Administration Salary Variance Monitoring Employment Status Validation Additional Payments		Policies Recruitment Training Performance Management		
Governance and Premises					
Section 7: Governance	Key Areas	Section 8: Compliance with the Academies Financial Handbook	Key Areas	Section 9: Statutory Policies	Key Areas
	The Trust Board Register of Business Interests Risk Management Financial Regulations Financial Management Skills of the Trust		Review against the MUSTS Nonstatutory Guidance Action Plan of Steps		Statutory Policy List Review of Policy Content Renewal Signoff and Schedule of Delegation Compliance
IT and Data					
Section 10: IT Audit	Key Areas	Section 11: Cyber Security	Key Areas	Section 12: Website Compliance	Key Areas
	Spend Analysis Capacity Planning Network Monitoring and Administration Maintenance and Backups Performance Monitoring		IASME Governance Standard Cyber Essentials Requirements Penetration Testing Business Continuity Considerations		Review of Statutory Information on the Website Ease of Use and Key Information Accessibility Use of Social Media and Marketing







# Our Team



## FOUNDERS OF UNITY SCHOOL SERVICES

Steven is the co-founder of Unity School Services. He has worked in the education sector for over 15 years, in maintained, faith schools and academy settings with inner London and Sussex schools.

Steven is currently a specialist Leader in Education and former executive leader with a multi-academy trust. He has provided many schools with a range of solutions in areas including governance, business and financial management, school marketing reviews, in house catering and human resources support. Steven has supported schools, as a specialist Leader in Education and has delivered admin audits, audit reporting, finance support, internal audit and workshops as part of the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) qualification.

Jay is the co-founder of Unity School Services. He has worked in the education sector for over 24 years, from humble beginnings manning a local authority helpdesk, to his current role where he leads a team of consultants in supporting business managers in all facets of school management, including compliance, finance and financial strategies.

He also lends support to local authorities in financial management of their school cohorts, with an emphasis on future pupil provision, planning, and budget modelling for sustainability and long-term provision.





# What our clients say...



*"A special thank you for all that you did to make such a valuable and insightful contribution to our Ofsted inspection. Your eloquent and confident dialogue, together with your supreme professional knowledge, will have a significant impact on the overall Ofsted judgement. You are a real star, as always."*

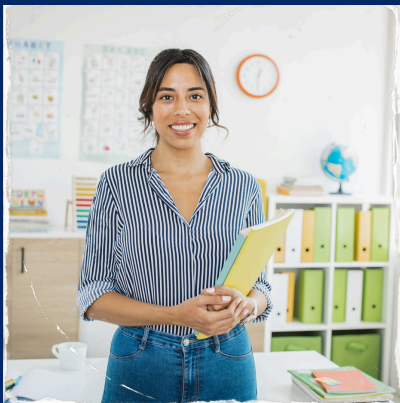
**- Chair of Governors**

*"Thank you your interim cover as our SBM. Your outstanding commentary on all financial aspects – I certainly came away with a much better understanding of everything!"* - **Headteacher**



*"Thank you so much for everything you have done for our Multi Academy Trust. You are excellent at what you do!"*

**- CEO of a Multi Academy Trust**



*It's been such fun getting to know you through my governor role and you've helped me understand school finance so much since I joined the board, so thank you for all your work!*

**- School Governor**



# What our clients say...



*"Your grants e-listing has been a lifeline for our school. As funding is cut year on year, this has helped us maintain our arts and parent workshops! Total worth the money, thank you!"*

**- Headteacher, Primary School**

*"WOW! You recovered over **£575,000** in just 6 months for our school. We have decided to keep this work with you, saving our SBM so much time to concentrate on other areas. Headteachers out source this work, it's just amazing!"*

**- Headteacher, Special School**



*"One of the best decisions we made as an organisation, you have successfully secured **£66,000** in a series of grants for our schools!"*

**- CEO, Multi-academy trust**







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# CONTACT US


We understand that each schools situation and needs are unique to them.

Book a 30 minute virtual meeting with one of our founders to discuss your school needs [Contact us!](#)

We look forward to speaking with you soon.

The Unity Team.

 [hello@unityschoolservices.co.uk](mailto:hello@unityschoolservices.co.uk)

 07810 683 445

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

SCAN ME

