

Our Offer

Our clear intention is to **make a difference to the learning and life chances of the children** for whom we provide an education, and by extension, the children of our community and our country.

Collaborative Partnership Offer



Leadership Support

To partner with schools in leading their settings, ensuring expert leadership and high-calibre educators.

- During a half-termly visit, the Chief Executive or Director of Education will support evaluation and improvement planning.
- Additionally, members will have unlimited access to advice and support from the central team and peer buddy system.
- Conduct appraisal sessions with Headteachers and the Chairperson of the Local Governing Body
- Ongoing advisory body (governing body) support and training and development.
- Commission support from strategic improvement partners as required.
- Headteachers meet termly as an Extended Leadership Team to support Trust-wide decision-making.
- SLT termly CPD Network meeting with the Director of Education and Executive Headteacher on developing leadership pathways.
- The Chief Finance and Operating Officer, along with the Assistant Chief Finance Officer, provides strategic direction for Finance, HR, IT, and Estate Management within the Trust.
- Ensure consistent monitoring of educational standards and sharing of best practices across the Trust through termly Headteacher reports to Local Governing Bodies and Termly Trust newsletter.
- Enhance leadership capabilities by nurturing upcoming practitioners throughout the Trust

The Trust wants to empower strong and autonomous local leadership and governance. We aim to deliver our sponsor commitment in a collaborative and innovative way.

- Local Governing body Chairperson termly network meeting with the Trust Board chairperson and Chief Executive.
- Open invitation to observe the Trust School Improvement committee meetings.
- Heads-Space: access to group and 1:1 leadership coaching for all school leaders.
- Trust quality assurance driven by senior and middle leaders, with an open invitation for local governors to shadow.
- Annual governance development day led by the Trust Governance Professional and Chief Executive. Creating an event where Local Governors can work alongside Trustees and Members.
- Half-termly 'Bank Statement' presented to Local Governors setting out the school's financial health.
- Board committees working on behalf of all schools:
 - Succession and Growth
 - School Improvement
 - Finance and Resource
 - Audit and Risk
 - Remuneration

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- 1. Will the Trust determine our Local Governing Body agenda?**
 - No. But the Trust will expect a sharp focus on school improvement priorities through case studies and spotlights.
 - **Who decides who can be a local governor of the school?**
 - This is done in partnership between Trustees, the Local Governing Body Chairperson and the Chief Executive.
 - **Is the Linked Trustee in charge of governance in our school?**
 - No. The role is to ensure the Board has a direct line of communication and a purposeful relationship with school leaders.
- 2. How can Local Governors engage the Chief Executive?**
 - The Chief Executive will always attend a Local Governing Body meeting on request. This can be arranged through the Governance Professional. In addition, the Chief Executive will attend meetings to observe and participate.
- 3. Our Clerk arrangements are effective, and we do not want to see these change, will they?**
 - No. The Trust is not interested in changing things that are working well.
- 4. Who decides about recruitment and employment?**
 - The Scheme of Delegation sets out the levels of authority across the trust by the Trust Board. This is available on our website. Headteacher recruitment is managed directly by the Chief Executive and will include representation from both Governors and Trustees.
- 5. Our Body composition is different to the Trust model. What happens to our group?**
 - If the model is working well the Board will consider taking a flexible approach to its composition. Once again, the Trust is not in the business of changing things that work well.

Improvement Support (core)

To ensure best practices are identified, shared, and distributed collaboratively and efficiently so that all schools strive towards excellence and become capacity builders.

- Collaborative partnerships are established by schools for schools (SEND, Safeguarding & Welfare, subject specific, Personal Development, and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)/Staff wellbeing)
- All schools will support identifying talented individuals who can contribute to the collaborative partnership.
- A suite of Trust- commissioned quality assurance and review programmes to help schools identify strengths and areas of development (Safeguarding, Curriculum, SEND, Behaviour and Personal Development)
- All schools support the quality assurance and review programmes by identifying talented individuals who can contribute and support peer reviews
- All schools receive one self-evaluation (SEF) led deep enquiry completed by the central executive team, with the support of external consultants when necessary
- All schools will become Arbor, CPOMS and Jigsaw Schools
- All schools have access to centralised training and professional development – TES online safeguarding training, governance, annual conference (The Big Conversation and Small Talks).
- All schools have access to the Trust's supervision and safeguarding consultation support, and reporting frameworks
- All schools have access to and participant in RET Alternative Provision (AP) quality assurance framework
- All schools engaged with and supported by the Trust's attendance strategy
- All schools will receive support before an Ofsted inspection, with additional help from a peer mentor for schools scheduled within a twelve-month inspection window.
- All schools utilise the Trust Values Assessment Framework to celebrate how all pupils develop.

Frequently asked questions

1. How often are the networks refreshed and priorities realigned?

- Each year the Trust reviews the impact of the networks with colleagues from across the schools. This feedback, along with school self-evaluations and external recommendations (MAT assurance reviews, Ofsted), inform the network structure and priorities for the next academic year. However, Safeguarding & Welfare and SEND are foundation networks and always remain.

2. How will governors receive feedback from any Trust commissioned reviews?

- Following a MAT assurance review, a summary of findings, including any recommendations are published and shared with school leaders, including the local governing body.

3. What is the RET Alternative Provision QA framework?

- The Trust has an externally verified and robust quality assurance framework, which ensures any of our children who receive their education via an alternative provider is safe and has access to high quality, needs led education. The framework is co-ordinated by the Trust AP Lead, with identified school-based colleagues contributing and supporting the QA process.

Improvement Support (core+)

Schools can receive additional support for school improvement beyond the Core Trust Offer.

- The school improvement offer includes access to external expertise. This extra capacity can help schools develop subject/area expertise internally and ensure they receive up-to-date and evidence-based guidance on all aspects of curriculum, teaching and learning, and social and emotional development.
- These external experts are Trust consultants and will form the team responsible for completing deep enquiries as part of the quality assurance process. Schools will receive one deep enquiry as part of their Trust core entitlement. This approach also provides opportunities for professional growth and builds capacity to support schools outside of the Trust.
- Schools can commission Trust consultants to help them in various aspects, such as developing Self-Evaluation Forms and School Improvement Plans, including termly Statement of Action, Annual School Improvement Plans, or three-year cycle plans.
- Schools can commission the Trust Attendance & Welfare Team, who will oversee all pupil attendance, including; a centralised attendance and welfare contact number for parents, safe and well visits, family support, completing attendance related referrals and statutory processes.
- Schools can commission a range of Trust intensive support packages, to accelerate school improvement.
- The Trust provides Interim Executive Board support for developing local governance where required.
- The Trust also provides a Behaviour Therapist, Environmental Coordinator, and a Dedicated Central Attendance and Welfare Team.

What are the benefits for a school in commissioning the Trust Attendance & Welfare Team?

- The Trust Attendance & Welfare Team allows schools to redirect valuable resource and teams of people to focus on their educational offer for all children, instead of having coordinate absence related matters including dealing with daily pupil absence phone calls and organising safe and well visits.
- Schools benefit from a team of high qualified and experienced practitioners, whom have a proven track record of supporting school attendance and offering support to families.

Finance Support

We ensure every school has the financial tools and support needed to operate efficiently and with added value.

- Our highly skilled Central Team, headed by our Chief Finance and Operating Officer (CFOO), collaborates closely with finance professionals in our schools to optimise the resources available for teaching and learning while ensuring strict compliance with regulatory guidelines and best practices.
- The Trust's Scheme of Delegation is a guide that sets out the parameters of decision making at all levels of the organisation.
- The Assistant Chief Finance Officer is responsible for managing and reporting financial activities under the guidance of the CFOO. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - Centralising and processing supplier payments
 - Generating monthly monitoring reports
 - Conducting statutory audits
 - Preparing Annual Accounts
 - Filing VAT returns
 - Reconciling bank and payroll accounts
 - Submitting Education Skills and Funding Agency **financial compliance requirements**

We aim to ensure every school has the financial tools and support needed to operate efficiently and with added value.

- Collaborating with schools, we produce a three-year financial projection to guide decision-making.
- The CFOO assists schools by completing Integrated Curriculum Financial Planning (ICFP) to ensure resource-focused decision-making for better outcomes.
- Every school undergoes monthly reviews to control expenditures and ensure optimal fund utilisation.
- Every term, the Headteacher, CFOO, and CEO hold a finance meeting to facilitate decision-making collaboration between schools and the Trust. All schools have access to support and training to ensure compliance with financial policies and procedures outlined in the Academies Trust Handbook.
- In addition to the Trust Finance system, key school personnel will receive regular updates on financial regulations, policies and procedures through the Professional Business Network.
- Strengthen purchasing power by pooling resources for high-value purchases to maximise value for public funds and targeted children.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- 1. What are the advantages and disadvantages of being in a resourced pooled arrangement?**
 - We work collaboratively to improve outcomes for all the children within the MAT. A particular advantage of a resource pooled arrangement is that through collation of data, outcomes of quality assurance and budget setting process, the MAT fairly applies capital spend in areas of need.
- 2. How will our finance systems, procedures and policies change by being in a MAT?**
 - You will work in collaboration with the central team through the common finance system. The Trust sets the central finance policy to adhere to the Academy Trust Handbook which sets the financial procedures. All policies and procedures adopt national terms and conditions of the profession.
- 3. Our school has a School Business Manager, what will be their role within the MAT?**
 - The skills of a SBM can be well utilised within the trust. Our business professionals have a multi-faceted role that includes finance, HR, estates, health & safety, supporting the SLT whilst benefiting from the support of the central team. Through the PDR process that aligns with the ISBL Professional Standards, career aspirations are encouraged.
- 4. We have a high level of reserves, what will happen to those if we join the MAT?**
 - Your reserves will become part of a pooled investment in capital and resources both now and in the future to improve the learning environment for employees and pupils.
- 5. What is ICFP?**
 - ICFP (Integrated Curriculum Financial Planning) is a way of mapping your expenditure against national benchmarks to understand how and where your budget is spent with a focus on your curriculum.

Human Resources Support

As an Employer of Choice, we ensure compliance with all legal and operational systems.

- A professionally qualified HR Advisor will be allocated to provide support services. The advisor will offer advice and support on various employment-related matters such as absence management, capability, conduct, grievance, and management of change consultation processes. This support also includes assisting with outcomes related to restructures, TUPE transfer, changes to terms and conditions, and any other employment-related issues.
- The HR Advisor will attend formal meetings defined by Trust policies and provide interpretation of current employment law to ensure that the advice given is accurate.
- Safer recruitment is undertaken through the application tracking system with DBS checks carried out centrally.
- Provide guidance and assistance to governors and headteachers during formal hearings and appeals, notification and advice regarding upcoming legislative or national policy changes affecting school employment matters.
- Our external legal services team provides advisory notes on upcoming legislative changes and emerging case law impacts.
- Occupational Health provision is negotiated on behalf of schools to support employees. The provision includes services such as new employee health assessments and providing occupational health advice on individual health difficulties that may impact their work performance. This support helps to provide information, guidance, and recommendations to leaders to make informed decisions.

We strive to remain an Employer of Choice by ensuring compliance with all legal and operational systems.

- The service also offers management referrals and sickness absence advice, fitness to return to work and how to manage a return to full capacity.
- Medical advice on ill health retirement and associated documentation required for Pension Regulations is provided.
- In addition, the service assists in carrying out specific statutory risk assessments and offers advice on reasonable adjustments that should be made to accommodate people with disabilities to be employed or continue employment.
- Schools receive support and guidance regarding employment procedures. This support includes access to an application tracking system placing vacancies automatically on the DfE's Teacher Vacancy site and job boards. The collaborative management of the recruitment process and employee records, including contractual support and adherence to KCSIE is carried out through FaceEd and SAM People automatically updating your online SCR.
- Schools access to a payroll portal for monthly returns i.e. mileage, overtime, contractual changes. All new schools will be part of the Trust's external payroll provider from month one.
- Support to process starter and leaver documentation to meet HMRC requirements and provide all legally required pay documents such as P45 and P60. A central Helpline for employees who have salary payment queries.
- Recruitment management and support for headteacher/SLT posts.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- 1. We currently receive HR support through the LA who automatically provide contracts, fixed term extension letters and manage all our case work. Will this be the same?**
 - Yes. We have a central HR team who will create all contractual letters linked to colleagues' employment. Professionally qualified HR colleagues will support any HR queries and case work guiding and supporting Business Professionals and Headteachers through the process.
- 2. What is FaceEd and SAM People?**
 - FaceEd is the Application Tracking System which is a tool to support all online recruitment from vacancy raising to appointment. SAM People is our HRIS which manages the full employee life cycle and includes the MySAM portal which is the HR communication method across the trust.
- 3. How would you help us to manage employee absence and leave of absence requests?**
 - Colleagues can request leave of absence through the MySAM portal for line managers to approve in-line with the policy (no more paper!).
 - The HR Advisor works with you to support colleagues to remain in work. The partnership between the Trust, Business Professionals and Headteachers reduced short term absence by 366 days in 2022-23.
- 4. Are there any plans for restructuring or changes in staff roles?**
 - Headteachers have the autonomy to create their own staffing model within an agreed budget. Within an agreed number of years, all trust schools align with a trust pay framework. A framework that is aligned to national agreed terms and conditions.
- 5. What happens with the TUPE transfer?**
 - You will be supported throughout the TUPE transfer process by our HR department. As the Trust is a member of the Joint National Council with unions, full consultation will be made to ensure your employees terms and conditions are protected/aligned with the Trust.

Estates Support

Our mission is to assist schools in achieving their best and maintaining a safe environment for pupils and employees.

- Collaborate with all schools to ensure that they have the necessary policies and procedures in place, which align with the DFE's Good Estates Management for Schools (GEMS) guidance.
- Support schools in designing, budgeting and planning future building developments and improvements
- Assist schools in sourcing additional funding through the Capital Improvement Fund (CIF), the Decarbonisation Fund and other means to invest in and improve their buildings, ensuring they comply with legislative requirements.
- Carry out testing and services, and we support schools in managing maintenance and repair through the estates compliance system. Ensure that Trust policies and procedures meet legislative requirements for estates, Health and Safety, and Fire Safety.
- Half-termly estates team meetings supports working collaboratively with site employees across all schools as a single team sharing best practices and providing training and development.
- Ensure that all annual Health and Safety audits are completed and align systems and processes that allow effective recording, monitoring, and reporting of all matters related to Health and Safety and Fire Safety.

Our mission is to assist schools in achieving their best and maintaining a safe environment for pupils and employees.

- Ensure that all schools have access to the Trust estates compliance system and provide the necessary training for using the system.
- Integrate the Trust ICT Managed Service, which includes annual audits of infrastructure and hardware, to ensure that schools are working with the most effective and up-to-date technology, data protection, and cybersecurity compliance.
- Procure telephone, printing, CPOMS and IMS (Arbor) services centrally to achieve the best value for money.
- Support schools with in-house or contracted cleaning provisions and ensure a high-quality service keeps schools looking their best.
- The Trust monitors performance and value for money where external contractors are appointed.
- The Trust carries out thorough due diligence checks for contractor management.
- Support schools with the development and management of school websites, social media platforms, and email domains.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- 1. How would the MAT further enhance our estates strategy?**
 - We will carry out a site condition survey and with existing surveys and audits, collaborate a 3-year asset management improvement plan.
- 2. We have SLAs with contractors. Will these continue when we move to the Trust?**
 - Yes. Contracts will continue until their term ends. Leading towards this point, there will be discussion and agreement reached about future contractors.
 - We adopt the LA Health & Safety suite of policies, procedures and risk assessments.
- 3. What will happen when we are part of the MAT?**
 - We will work together to align with trust-wide policies to ensure consistency and compliance across all academies.
 - An annual schedule of supportive reviews is included as a key benefit.
- 4. How will the Trust support our IT infrastructure?**
 - The Trust's external IT company will audit the school's existing IT infrastructure to understand its strengths, weaknesses, and compatibility with the broader trust systems. The Trust has specific cybersecurity complying with KSCIE guidance and data protection standards that need to be implemented in the school's IT infrastructure.
 - All schools have a common email address working under one tenancy.

Professional Learning & Development

Working together to support improvement.

- Collaborative curriculum networks across the group of schools provide opportunities to share evidence-based pedagogical and curriculum developments.
- Peer support through a diverse network of schools ensures disadvantaged children receive a high-quality education.
- The organisation is committed to supporting improvement in the field of Special Education. We are partnering with local universities to develop a bespoke Masters Degree programme, which is fully funded and tailored to meet the needs of our educators.
- All schools participate in the National Professional Qualification (NPQ) initiatives
- Publish a Relay Magazine every term, which outlines research-driven practices and provides valuable insights into our field.
- The SEND reviewer training programme is an excellent opportunity to work with system leaders specialising in effective SEND provision. We also offer Teacher Walkabouts, which allow educators to spend time in diverse settings across the Trust, supporting teaching and learning developments.
- Provide access to Team Teach facilitators and offer annual refresher training.
- Employees have access to shared facilities across the Trust and receive training in all statutory areas, such as safeguarding and health and safety.
- Moderation exercises are conducted across the Trust, and we hold annual collaborative check-in areas such as the Single Central Record.
- Host the Trust Annual Conference: The Big Conversation, which brings together educators, researchers, and experts to discuss the latest trends and innovations in Education.
- Small Talk. Colleague informed termly CPD sessions, providing ongoing development and an opportunity for colleagues to reflect on learning and share practice.
- Aspirant Teacher and Growing Leader Programmes - designed to provide colleagues with evidence-informed learning and hands on experiences.
- All colleagues have the opportunity to be trained as Mental Health First Aiders

What is the rationale to have all colleagues trained as mental health first aiders?

- The Trust is committed to the wellbeing of all children and adults. Following consultation with the EDI/Staff Wellbeing Network, it was felt in order to establish a culture "it is ok, not to be ok", the Trust needed the ambition that every adult is trained as mental health first aider to enable them to lookout for themselves and each other.
- Each year there is a rolling programme of mental health first aider training, delivered by the Trust's qualified mental health first aider trainer.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is the SEND reviewer training programme?

- Identified colleagues get the opportunity to shadow and participate in the SEND review programme, having the opportunity to work alongside Trust colleagues and support the development **of SEND provision across the Trust and the wider system.**

2. What is the Growing Leaders programme?

- This programme provides evidenced-based learning, peer support and hands-on opportunities to colleagues that may be considering a career in teaching. The aim of the programme is to provide colleagues with a well-supported but a "real" insight into the teaching profession, allowing them to make informed decisions regarding next steps in their career.

3. Which NPQ qualifications does the Trust engage in, and what opportunities are there for non-qualified colleagues?

- The Trust is an advocate for all the NPQ qualifications and actively promotes them across all our schools.
- Yes, there are now NPQ qualifications that are accessible for non-qualified colleagues such as the NPQBLC.

4. How does the Trust ensure the development needs of all colleagues are taken into account?

- All team leaders are consulted regarding the design of The Big Conversation, with the aim that all colleagues experience a rich learning experience that supports their day-to-day role.
- A Trust Professional Learning & Development audit is completed biennially by the Trust's Learning & Development Lead, helping to inform the Trust's CPD offer.