



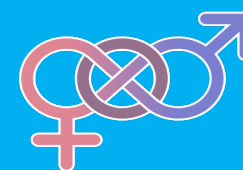
Workforce Engagement Statement

2023-24

Caring
Nurturing
Child-Centred Family-Focused
Encouraging Enriching
Empowering Passionate
Inclusive

Our academies





Workforce Profile

As of 31 August 2024, the Trust employs 1157 individuals across our 15 academies and the central Trust team, an increase of fifty compared to the last year. 27% of our workforce are employed as teachers, and 73% are employed in a teaching assistant or non-teaching role.

Hilltop School has the most staff, with 143 (99.8 FTE) employees, whilst Discovery Academy employs the fewest with 41 (37.1 FTE).

Our most recent gender pay report states that 83.8% of the workforce identify as female, 15.9% as male and 0.3% as non binary, which is a slight change from the previous year. There is a gender pay gap for both mean and median pay levels. We remain confident that this is principally due to the high proportion of female employees in the lower quartiles of paid roles in the Trust – rather than a gender disparity within our pay structure. 83% of our upper-middle tier earners are female, as are 73% in the upper pay tier.

25% of the workforce are aged under 30; 57% are aged 31-54; 17% are aged 55-66 and 1% are 67 or over. 94.7% of our workforce identify as white British or white other, with 5.3% identifying as dual or of BAME heritage. 2% of our workforce have declared that they have a recognised disability.

In 2023-24, Nexus MAT recorded 13,950 days lost to sickness (6.65% of total working days available). The majority of these days were related to sickness instances that lasted less than 20 days. 351 employees met some form of sickness absence trigger, which necessitates a response in line with the Trust's Sickness Absence & Wellbeing Policy. 290 sanctions were issued for poor staff attendance. 1 employee was dismissed under this policy.



Employee Voice



In February 2024, the Trust undertook its biennial employee opinion survey, which provides employees with anonymity in responding to a wide range of questions about their school and their MAT.

Overall, 68% of staff responded, which is a marked increase compared to the 43% response rate in 2022, across what is now a much larger Trust (there are 4 more schools in the Trust in 2024, compared to 2022 when the last employee opinion survey was undertaken).

Of those who responded, 98% of employees feel driven in their work to make their school a success; 94% of employees look forward to coming to work most days; and 95% of employees have confidence in their school leadership team, and believe that the school is managed effectively. From a MAT perspective, 93% of staff welcome the chance to work with colleagues from other schools and are proud to be part of our family of schools, and 96% of employees agree that the trust vision of 'Learning together to be the best we can be' reflects what's important to them.

77% of employees are satisfied with the employment benefits and information available to support their health, wellbeing and happiness.

Satisfaction has increased from 2022 survey around employees having the appropriate resources, health and safety considerations and work life balance to complete their role effectively.

Satisfaction has increased from 2022 survey in all areas of management, including line management, school leadership and the Trust. The Trust will use the survey to help inform our programme of employee wellbeing over the next 2 years.



Pay & conditions

The Trust employs all staff on one of two pay models: either school teacher pay and conditions (the Burgundy Book) for qualified teaching staff or terms and conditions aligned to local government pay, as agreed through the National Joint Council (the Green Book). The Trust automatically enrolls all staff in either the Teacher Pension Scheme or the Local Government Pension Scheme if they have a contract lasting 3 months or more.

Pay scales/grades in localities (i.e. local authority areas) continue to be adhered to by the Trust, to ensure that our academies remain competitive employers locally. This does generate some difference in pay grades from one locality to another, though this is marginal and is due to the different structured pay scales/grades set by local authorities within the National Joint Council Single Status scheme. It is important to the Board of Directors that the Trust remains a competitive employer across the wide regions in which we operate.

In May 2022 the Trust officially became a member of the Real Living Wage Foundation, reflecting our drive to raise the lowest levels of pay, bottom up.



Continuous professional learning & development



The Trust has a proud track record of utilising the Government's apprenticeship levy to enable entry into our employment pyramid, being named Employer of the Year in 2020 by Rotherham and North Notts College and Highly Commended in 2024. We also have a clear model for delivering the Teacher Early Career Framework, supporting both our Early Career Teachers and their Mentors.

The Trust has now established the Enterprise Learning Institute, drawing together much of the expertise available across our academies and published in the annual prospectus.

We have continued to deliver our future leaders programme - Generation NeXt - which is offered to aspiring senior leaders in conjunction with the national professional qualifications that staff are encouraged to access via our Teaching School Hub partnerships. We are also a contributing member of the Yorkshire 100 initiative, a partnership with MATs from across the Yorkshire & Humber region and the Reach Foundation, seeking to develop the next 100 Headteachers for the most challenging schools in our state education system.

We continue to have a close working relationship with local education networks and we also work closely with regional universities. We deliver a bespoke level 3 apprenticeship programme for our teaching assistant workforce, in partnership with Waterton Academy Trust. We also fund membership of the National College, and their plethora of online learning materials are available for our workforce, as well as working with the Education Endowment Foundation, the Chartered College of Teaching and the National Institute of Teaching to enhance pathways in the teaching profession.





Employment enablement

Whilst good industrial relations is in the DNA of our Trust, we also have formal systems established to ensure that this remains in place. The Trust expects both teaching and non-teaching staff to have representation on local governance, with two staff governor positions enshrined in our terms of reference, and we actively seek to fill any and all vacancies as they emerge. These governors are also invited to come together once a term to attend our Staff Parliament, chaired by the Trust Chief Executive Officer.

The Trust places high value on the role that Trades Unions play in supporting employee voice and wellbeing. That is why we choose to pay for facilities time to allow local reps to continue to work with members, collaborate and raise concerns with leaders at the earliest possible point so that issues can be resolved quickly and effectively.

The Trust is a signatory of the Care Leaver Covenant, which states our commitment to ensure that former looked after children have the offer of help and support to make the transition into the working world. However, we have gone further than the commitment that comes with signing this covenant: we have sought to establish partnerships with our local authority leaving care teams, so that we can provide greater in-reach to better facilitate and enable care leavers in making that first step on the career ladder.



Connecting our academy workforce



Whilst every employee in our academies is employed by Nexus MAT, we recognise that individuals usually opt to join a school community because they want to work in that setting with the children and staff there. As such, we never force staff to move around the Trust.

However, our employee opinion surveys told us that staff want to have more opportunities to work with colleagues from across our academies and to consider things like secondments to other schools in the Trust. We also have a supply bank of teachers and teaching assistants, massively reduce agency costs for our schools whilst simultaneously providing another entry point to our employment offer.

Through 2023-24, as in previous years, we facilitated a number of secondments and will continue to provide these opportunities in future. We also have a weekly jobs bulletin that is shared with all staff, outlining all vacancies across our schools.

In September 2023 we established our professional learning communities, building on our subject network groups and bringing staff together from across the Trust around a common area of expertise or curriculum. Our Staff Parliament provides a platform for our school staff governors to connect, and in 2023-24, in addition to our cross-Trust INSET day, we also held two trust-wide pupil Olympics, which brought our staff together.





A commitment to employee happiness

Our employee opinion surveys told us that staff feel well supported and cared for, but this is an area of work where we will remain restless in our pursuit of being the best we can be. The Trust has committed to the Education Staff Wellbeing Charter, which will ensure we are using as an objective framework, developed by government, to self-assess against and deliver future improvement activity.

FLEXIBLE WORKING AMBASSADOR MATS AND SCHOOLS

The Trust is the lead MAT nationally for the government's Flexible Working Ambassador programme for special schools. This means we have the opportunity to work with other schools and trusts across England to support them in doing more to enable and facilitate flexible working.

The Trust has - since 2022 - commissioned an Employee Assistance Programme, which provides all staff with a range of support interventions and resources. Employees are able to opt into the Westfield Health service at a discounted rate, with access to its extensive rewards benefits platform, the wellbeing service and app, and the voluntary health cash plan.

The Trust has adopted the "blue light card" discount scheme which many other parts of the public sector have access to, and this will be rolled out from September 2024.

The Trust has enhanced its "cycle to work" scheme to improve physical wellbeing and progress our green strategy.





Journey to net zero carbon emissions

We believe **the climate crisis requires courage and ambition**. Our journey to net zero plan is at the heart of our commitment to being a sustainable and ethically-driven Multi Academy Trust. The plan outlines our ambition to reach net zero by 2030 and how we will undertake this journey, working together across all elements of our organisation and with our **pupils, families and communities at the centre**.

Every school in our Trust has achieved or is working towards the Eco Schools Green Flag, this award brings our pupils together with staff to undertake work in school and the community to reduce carbon emissions and increase understanding of the impacts of climate change.

We have completed our first projects to decarbonise our buildings including LED lighting systems, lower energy heating systems, solar panels linked to new roofing projects, and making the cycle to work scheme more accessible and more appealing. Our young people are central to these activities too, through many projects such as Earth Day, tree planting, pupil recycling champions, and developing wildlife areas. Every one of our academies is committed to ensuring that climate change is embedded within the curriculum.

In expanding our new West Riding campus in 2023-24, we have continued to hold the inclusion of biophilic principles at the heart of our pupils' learning environment design.



