

Education Village Academy Trust



Prospectus 2023

Joining the Education Village Academy Trust



Introduction

Established in 2006, the Education Village Academy Trust (EVAT) is a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) made up of 5 academies and schools in the borough of Darlington:

- **Haughton Academy** - a mainstream secondary school providing education to pupils aged 11 to 16 years
- **Beaumont Hill Academy** - a specialist provider of education to children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities aged 2 to 19 years
- **Springfield Academy** - a mainstream primary school providing education to pupils aged 4 to 11 years
- **Gurney Pease Academy** - a mainstream provider of education to pupils aged 2 to 11 years
- **Marchbank Free School** - a specialist provider of education to children with social, emotional and mental health difficulties aged 4 to 11 years

We provide education and support to over 1600 children and young people in Darlington and its neighbouring areas and our mix of mainstream and specialist provision across all phases is unique. We're an impactful Trust with a very strong track record of working with schools and academies to consistently improve provision and outcomes for learners and achieve "good" Ofsted ratings.

Our vision is simple:

“The Education Village Academy Trust is a place where learning has no limits.”



Background, vision, ethos and mission:

EVAT was founded on the principles of inclusivity, diversity and fairness. Those principles continue to be fundamental to our delivery of exceptional learning experiences.

Our schools have diverse backgrounds and contexts, and they all serve different cohorts of pupils, some of whom are incredibly able and talented, and some of whom have very high levels of special needs.

Being different and diverse is our strength. By using our strengths in our respective areas, we work together, as a village, to share our experiences and skills across settings, seamlessly blend our learning environments, and successfully drive improvement in provision across the Trust and beyond.

Our ethos is inclusive and child centred. We work to:

- Create a nurturing and friendly atmosphere and provide an environment where everyone feels valued for who they are
- Bring out the best in every child and young person and meet the full range of their individual needs
- Provide different and unique experiences, challenges and activities
- Show tolerance and respect for each other
- Prepare our children and young people for lifelong learning
- Improve the life chances of every child and young person we serve

Our priorities for the next five years are to:

- Provide exceptional learning experiences and maximise outcomes for our children and young people
- Build an even stronger Trust – fit for the future, with firm financial foundations and scalable structures and systems
- Grow the Trust strategically and sustainably and with the core purpose of extending our reach to improve the educational outcomes and life chances of more children and young people in Darlington and beyond
- Be more aware of our impact on our natural environment and create a passion for its protection and sustainability in our pupils and staff; reduce our carbon footprint; and create more exciting spaces in which to learn and work

Joining our Trust

Choosing EVAT

We have:

- A strong school improvement offer with a clear track record in driving transformation and improvement in schools and academies, as proven in our Ofsted ratings
- A clear ethos. Our school system is inclusive, fair and works for every child. We make a place for ourselves in every community we engage with and we're well placed to work with key partners to embed community values and create a passion for the protection of the natural environment in our children and young people
- Extensive experience in directing resources and funding towards the pupils who need them the most. Our safeguarding approach is well embedded. We focus on pupils who need help to ensure they are not disadvantaged by time lost in the classroom due to Covid, and are supported to achieve their potential, build resilience and develop critical life and employment skills
- A strong financial position, and we have plans in place to manage rising costs to protect our long-term financial health, enabling us to invest more in continuously improving the teaching and learning experience
- A clear and focused people strategy, complete with a comprehensive people offer (including clear workforce and wellbeing plans) to attract, develop, retain and invest in the development of staff members
- Made and continue to make significant investment in modernising technology across the Trust to reduce workload, increase efficiency, engage pupils and provide tools to support exceptional teaching and learning outcomes
- A strong and ambitious Board of Trustees and Educational Standards Committees (ESCs), with a clear vision for the future of EVAT and a wide range of skills and expertise to help us realise that vision. Regular reviews of governance and its effectiveness are planned to underpin growth plans

The EVAT Offer

School Improvement

The delivery of education is more challenging than ever before. Expectations are high, pupil demographics and needs are changing, and focused and sustainable school improvement is complicated.

As a Trust we offer a full range of support and improvement strategies for the delivery of education to children aged from 2 to 19 years, including those with significant special educational needs.

We don't offer a "one size fits all" school improvement model. Schools and academies are unique, they serve diverse and complex communities and each improvement journey is different as a result. Instead, we offer a bespoke school improvement experience, which is tailored to your individual school, academy or trust, and is in place for as long as you need it to be.

Our school improvement provision includes support and advice from our:

- Highly experienced CEO and lead school improvement specialists, working in our primary, secondary and special school settings. This may be a mix of school improvement specialists from any part of our provision, depending on your need. As part of this work, an improvement plan will be developed and where necessary, staff resources will be deployed to your school/academy to support you in implementing improvements and, where necessary, driving change
- Trustees and members of our Educational Standards Committees, who can offer guidance to your governance stakeholders, as they navigate the school improvement journey with us
- Other key partners, who work with us on developing and implementing strategies to meet the needs of all backgrounds and abilities, maximising their outcomes and enabling them to achieve their potential

At the start of your journey with us, we spend time with you understanding your current position, your pupils and the communities you serve, and your priorities.

We agree a plan for school improvement and work with you to identify the resources, both financial and people, we both need to successfully implement the plan.

Our mission is to deliver exceptional learning experiences for all our learners. We support you and your leadership team to review and build a quality curriculum, complete with a clear intent that matches your context and the needs of your pupils.

We would implement a rigorous internal quality assurance system, to check progress and quality of curriculum and give you and your governance stakeholders confidence your school improvement journey is on track. We would also:

- Establish a coaching culture to facilitate reflective practice and support curiosity in the most up-to-date teaching and learning practice
- Moderate and verify standards in teaching and learning, including school-wide and subject reviews. We would use this information to guide the delivery of the school improvement plan and continuously design interventions
- Regularly meet with your Senior Leadership Team and governance stakeholders to discuss progress and next steps
- Strengthen performance management reviews and link this to quality, bespoke CPD sessions and Trust-wide learning and development opportunities
- Provide timely data to your leaders to inform progress and enable you to focus on optimising outcomes for pupils

Finally, your success is our success and we will celebrate it together. Where you have examples of exceptional or best practice we will build on it, empowering you to share your ideas and expertise across the Trust and beyond.



Business Services

Our experienced team of business service professionals is in place to build resilience in day-to-day operations and enable teaching staff to focus on the delivery of exceptional learning experiences.

Business services are part of the package of support we offer. We follow the professional standards set out by the Institute of School Business Leaders (ISBL). As part of our business service offer, you can expect:

- A strategic approach to improvement and business planning, risk management and disaster recovery
- Dedicated financial management advice and support to ensure your school's budgets are targeted on delivering teaching and learning and maximising outcomes for learners
- Integrated Curriculum and Financial Planning to ensure your curriculum is as efficient as possible and will meet your improvement priorities
- A business partnering model to support your leaders with good people management practice, coaching, wellbeing strategies and effective performance management
- Simplified and automated business management systems and processes which reduce duplication and save money for reinvestment into learning. This includes a centralised payroll and finance management system
- Skilled and experienced procurement and purchasing advice and support to achieve significant economies of scale in the products and services you buy
- High-quality governance support from a governance professional including policy management and development, and compliance with DfE, ESFA, Companies House and Charities Commission regulation and legislation
- Expert estates and facilities management, ranging from support with energy efficiency, sustainability and decarbonisation to health and safety audits, reviews, advice and guidance
- Access to leading-edge technology and expert advice and support to enhance teaching and learning
- Project and change management support and advice, including project specification, plan design and full implementation of change
- Insightful and timely data to inform decision making and drive school improvement strategies and interventions. This includes advice and guidance on the use of data management systems, analysing data and action planning
- Creative marketing and branding programmes and campaigns to positively raise your profile locally, regionally and nationally

Finance

The Finance Team provides leadership and direction to the financial management and reporting functions of the Trust. By managing all aspects of the development and use of financial systems and procedures, the team partners the Trust's leaders and decision makers to set budgets, monitoring and challenge performance and ensuring the Trust's long-term financial viability and stability.

The Finance Team delivers:

- Strategic leadership of short-, medium- and long-term financial planning
- Business partnering advice and support to set and monitor budgets and manage resources effectively in line with Trust guidelines and the Academy Trust Handbook
- Statutory reporting in line with requirements of charity and company law and the submission of key returns to the ESFA, Teachers Pensions Fund, Local Government Pensions Fund and HMRC
- Management of financial year-end processes
- Monitoring and reconciliation of bank accounts and key control accounts such as pensions and payroll
- Cashflow monitoring and investment of surplus balances and investment policy advice and guidance
- Development and implementation of accounting and budget management software systems
- Development and implementation of procurement strategy and contract management reviews to deliver value for money services and efficiencies
- Procurement of appropriate insurance policies and managing the insurance claim process
- Liaison with pension services and advisers
- Leading internal and external audit services
- Support, advice and guidance on maximising school/academy-generated income such as lettings, and on debt recovery

People

The People Team drives the development and implementation of the Trust's people management strategy and ensures we are an employer of choice, attracting, retaining and nurturing the best talent.

The People Team delivers:

- Strategic people management advice and support including workforce planning and organisational restructure
- People policy development and advice to leaders and Trustees
- Business partnering leaders and managers to understand individual and team performance and develop people-focused strategies to optimise outcomes for learners and the Trust
- Operational casework, including investigations and support with disciplinary and grievance processes
- Staff absence management and intervention support
- Recruitment and retention strategies and access to employment benefits schemes
- Performance management and related pay advice
- Management of the Trust's people and payroll system
- Occupational health referrals
- Staff support and wellbeing strategies
- Strategic lead for employee relations and consultations



Governance

The Governance Team provides guidance, and high-quality administrative and organisational support to ensure the Trust's decision-making structures comply with the appropriate legal and regulatory frameworks. The team also provides advice on procedural matters to ensure the efficient and effective running of Trustee and Educational Standards Committee (ESC) meetings. The Governance Team is essential in maintaining the governance frameworks necessary to support key decision makers to hold our leaders to account, optimise outcomes for learners and ensure the financial health of the Trust.

The Governance Team delivers:

- Comprehensive professional governance service to the Trust Board and ESCs with a key focus on providing information in a timely and secure way
- A modularised governance induction and training package
- Maintenance of an up-to-date overview of all ESCs across the Trust, identifying vacancies, development needs and key issues for escalation to Trustees
- Link governor framework support
- Support for governors and Trustees with preparation for Ofsted inspection
- Trustee/governor self-review, appraisal and development plan support
- Lead data protection experts ensuring compliance with GDPR guidance and legislation
- The Trust's policy development and review framework, ensuring statutory policies are developed and are regularly reviewed in line with changes in national and local policy and legislation
- Maintenance of the Trust's central policy database, ensuring version control and providing links to underpinning processes and procedures

Estates, Facilities and Health and Safety

The Estates, Facilities and Health and Safety Team understands the different contexts of each school/academy and aims to ensure all learning environments are safe, well maintained and inspirational for learners. Leading on capital improvement projects and working closely with the Trust's finance team to ensure they are delivered efficiently, effectively and within budget, the team is responsible for the management of all estates and facilities in the Trust.

The Estates/Facilities and Health and Safety Team delivers:

- Development and implementation of health and safety and estate management policies and procedures
- Delivery of Trust-wide training in health and safety practices
- Strategic asset management planning and condition overview of the school estate
- Planning and management of annual capital works programmes, based on investment priorities, including initial project design concept and advice
- Planned and reactive maintenance advice and guidance
- Development and implementation of the compliance framework
- Facilities management
- Internal and external health and safety audits and advice
- Monitoring of cleaning contracts and hygiene services
- Advice and monitoring of grounds maintenance contracts
- Advice and monitoring of utilities contracts, particularly in relation to reducing the Trust's carbon footprint



IT

EVAT outsourced its IT service to RM for Education in 2022. The relationship is very much a partnership, and by outsourcing the service, we can access expert advice and support 24 hours a day. We have also invested in our technological architecture and infrastructure and we have rolled out a device refresh programme across EVAT. The contract is flexible and extendable to encompass any school joining the Trust. RM ensures our technology offer supports top-class teaching and learning, and is safeguarded against cyber-attack and disruption. The team leads the delivery of the full range of IT services to support schools and academies and oversees the maintenance of IT equipment across the Trust, ensuring kit is up to date and in the best condition to support teaching and learning.

Our IT provision includes:

- Guidance and advice to schools on the Trust's technology provision and support to schools/academies on system review and identification to support teaching and learning ambitions
- Project management support, advice and guidance on the identification and implementation of new systems and software
- Maintenance and development of the full range of IT infrastructure, including network, hardware and equipment
- IT helpdesk access for the efficient resolution of support needs
- Procurement support for whole-Trust solutions and value-for-money assessments/assurance in relation to the purchase of all hardware and software
- Internet access controls and monitoring in support of safeguarding and Prevent duties
- Software update and development
- Training and development support
- Business recovery and back-up systems support
- IT asset management, including rolling replacement planning, implementation and equipment disposal



Data

The Data Team collates and uses information and data to inform decision making and target intervention.

The Data Team delivers:

- Provision of standardised and aligned data analysis across the Trust to inform decision making
- Development and implementation of systems to monitor and track performance and identify opportunities for improvement
- Compilation of academy calendars and provision of dashboards to ensure visibility of data
- Conducts due diligence and assessment of schools/academies/Trusts wishing to join EVAT to effectively plan the integration and migration of data and understanding of progress in the first 18 months
- Targeted transition work

Marketing and Media

The Trust works with The Creative Agency on key aspects of its branding, media relations, PR, website design and development and social media. We also work with other local PR professionals to engage with the press. The contract is flexible and can include schools and Trusts who wish to join with EVAT.

Our marketing and media provision includes:

- Development of internal and external communications
- Management of publicity including social media, websites and school branding
- Website hosting, development and maintenance
- School branding, including signage, logo, website and social media
- Promotion of events and successes
- Production of promotional materials



Advantages Of Joining Our Trust

Significant advantages to joining our Trust include:

- A strong track record in enabling and implementing school improvement
- Tailored support to your unique circumstances to drive improvement, efficiency and opportunity within your context and setting
- Knowledge of and very strong relationships with local families and communities
- Eligibility to apply for significant capital and revenue funding from DfE and other key agencies to invest in teaching and learning, buildings and infrastructure and technology
- Support from a financially secure and sustainable Trust with an income of around £17.5M per year and almost £2M in reserves
- Specialist expertise in SEND
- Extensive opportunities for career progression and staff redeployment



Paying For Our Services

We work with our schools and academies to continuously develop and check the way we charge for our business and school improvement support services. This is to ensure our charging is fair, you receive good value for money and that every penny you spend with us has a tangible, positive benefit for pupils.

We are working towards the implementation of a percentage contribution approach. Charges would be based on the services you buy and use, enabling you to see clearly the support and service you receive for your money. We would discuss the charging model when we meet with you to understand your current position and your priorities.

Next Steps

For further information on EVAT's school improvement experience and our business support services, please contact Mike Butler, Chief Executive on mbutler@educationvillage.org.uk

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The Education Village Academy Trust is an exempt charity. It is a company limited by guarantee in England and Wales (Registered no: 7748248) whose registered office is as above.