# Prospectus

Education Village
Academy Trust

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# 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 7 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
- **Reid Street Primary School** – a mainstream primary school providing education to pupils aged 4 to 11 years
- **Whinfield Primary School –** a mainstream primary school providing education to pupils aged 4 to 11 years

We provide education and support to over 2,600 children and young people in Darlington and its neighbouring areas. 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, with all our schools achieving "good" or better Ofsted ratings.

# 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 today.

Our schools have diverse backgrounds and contexts, and they all serve different cohorts of pupils, covering a full range of abilities, talents and 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 vision is simple:**

**The Education Village Academy Trust is a place where learning has no limits**

Our **mission** is to deliver exceptional learning experiences to all our children and young people. We stretch aspirations and aim to inspire everyone who learns and works with us to reach high and achieve their potential.

**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 values guide our behaviour and actions. They represent who we are, shape our culture and define the things we do every day. Our values are:**

**Excellence** and high standards
-A can-do culture and no-excuses ethos

**Values driven** with a deep sense of moral purpose
-Putting children and young people first
-Behaving ethically

**Ambition and aspiration for all**
-Irrespective of background or barriers
-Being truly inclusive

**Teamwork**
-We do more, better and faster, together

**Our strategic 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

# Choosing EVAT

**EVAT has:**

- A strong school improvement offer with a clear track record in driving transformation and sustainable improvement in schools and academies, as proven in our Ofsted ratings
- A clear ethos and sense of civic duty. 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 are 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 illness or other reasons, 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
- A modern approach to using technology to reduce workload, increase efficiency, engage pupils and provide tools to support exceptional teaching and learning experiences
- 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 vison.

# The EVAT Offer

**School Improvement**

As a Trust we offer a full range of support and improvement strategies for the delivery of education to children and young people aged from 2 to 19 years, including those across the full range of special educational needs.
Our offer is not 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 bespoke school improvement support, which is tailored to your individual school, academy or trust, and is in place for as long as you need it to be. Ours is a collaborative approach that builds on your existing strengths.

**Our school improvement provision includes support and advice from our:**

- Chief Executive Officer. An executive leader of education with over two decades experience in improving schools and academies, our CEO has led the transformational change of national organisations, a wide range of schools and Multi Academy Trusts
- Highly skilled School Improvement Director (who is an experienced school improvement consultant) and our Executive Principals and lead school improvement specialists who work across our primary, secondary and special school settings. Depending on your need, we can deploy a mix of school improvement specialists from any part of our diverse provision to support you, your team and, most importantly, your pupils, to succeed
- Trustees and members of our Educational Standards Committees, who can offer guidance to your governance stakeholders, as they navigate the school improvement journey with you
- Other key partners, who work with us on developing and implementing strategies to meet the needs of children of all backgrounds and abilities, maximising their outcomes and enabling them to achieve their potential.



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

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

We would support you and your leadership team to ensure high-quality teaching and learning, and an ambitious curriculum, complete with a clear intent that matches your context and the needs of your pupils.

Where necessary, we would apply appropriate internal quality assurance processes, to check progress and give you and your governance stakeholders the confidence your school improvement journey is on track. Where required, additional support might also include:

- Signposting to relevant research evidence and/or best practice within our extensive networks
- Establishing a coaching culture to facilitate reflective practice and support curiosity in the most up-to-date teaching and learning practice
- Moderating and verifying standards in teaching and learning, including school-wide, and subject reviews
- Regularly meeting with your Senior Leadership Team and governance stakeholders to discuss progress and next steps
- Strengthening performance management reviews and linking them to quality, bespoke CPD sessions and Trust-wide learning and development opportunities
- Providing timely data to your leaders to inform progress and enable you to focus on optimising outcomes for pupils.

Finally, your success would be our success, and we would celebrate it together. We would work with you to build on examples of exceptional and best practice in your school, empowering you to share your ideas and expertise across the Trust and beyond.

# Business Services

EVAT's business services directorate is made up of teams of specialists in finance, procurement and audit, people services, governance, facilities and estates management, marketing, strategic planning, and project management and IT.

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

- A strategic approach to resource management, 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 regulations 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 Management Information Systems (MIS), data management, analysing data, and action planning
- Creative marketing and branding programmes and campaigns to positively raise your profile locally, regionally and nationally.

# When you join EVAT, our finance service will:

- Support your leaders and budget holders to efficiently manage budgets, explore income generation, and effectively plan for short, medium and long-term spending
- Lead statutory reporting for the Trust and its schools/academies, 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
- Manage financial year-end audit processes
- Monitor and reconcile bank accounts and key control accounts such as pensions and payroll, and report to Trustees and other key stakeholders as required
- Monitor cashflow and invest surplus balances to maximise interest on savings for the Trust and its schools
- Support leaders and budget holders to access and use accounting and budget management software systems to support their budget management and decision making
- Work with staff members and leaders to develop and implement the Trust's procurement strategy
- Work with staff members and leaders to review contracts and identify opportunities to reduce costs, improve quality and enhance value for money
- Ensure appropriate insurance policies are in place and the insurance claim process is effectively managed
- Lead internal and external audit services

# When you join EVAT, the estates and facilities service will:

- Work with you to develop and implement health and safety and estate management policies and procedures
- Provide training in health and safety practices
- Support leaders and managers to proactively manage the safety and wellbeing of staff members, pupils and other key stakeholders
- Work with leaders to strategically plan asset management and capital investment programmes
- Provide line management for onsite Building Maintenance Officers (BMOs), supporting them to provide planned and reactive maintenance
- Report compliance with regulation and health and safety recommendations to Trustees and key stakeholders
- Provide advice and guidance to school leaders on the effectiveness of grounds maintenance contracts
- Support with the continuous review of utilities contracts, particularly in relation to reducing costs and the Trust's overall carbon footprint

# When you join EVAT, the governance service will:

- Provide a comprehensive and professional support service to the Trust Board and your ESC (local governing body), ensuring information is provided in a timely and secure way
- Work with Trustees and ESC Chairs to succession plan, create talent pools, and effectively recruit, retain and develop volunteers
- Work with the Chair of Trustees and ESCs to complete skills and impact appraisals and use the findings to manage impact and design and deliver training programmes
- Ensure the Trust operates in line with its Articles of Association, Scheme of Delegation, Terms of Reference and overarching Trust Assurance Framework
- Support the Chair of Trustees and Chairs of ESCs to challenge performance and check progress through link governorships
- Work with leaders to ensure governors and Trustees access the information they require to support their preparation for Ofsted inspection
- Coordinate and support Data Champions across the Trust to comply with GDPR guidance and legislation, and respond effectively to Subject Access Requests
- Maintain and manage the Trust's policy development and review framework, ensuring statutory policies are developed and are regularly reviewed in line with requirements and changes in national and local policy and legislation

# When you join EVAT, the ICT service will:

- Performance manage all the Trust's IT managed service contracts and ensure the effective management of ICT infrastructure
- Work with digital strategy champions to continuously review the effectiveness of systems and assist in the identification of software and hardware to support teaching and learning ambitions
- Work with leaders and digital strategy champions to support the procurement of hardware and software to meet teaching and learning needs
- Oversee internet access controls and support Designated Safeguarding Leads to discharge their responsibilities in relation to online safety
- Provide training in systems, software and hardware, when necessary
- Ensure robust business recovery and back-up systems are in place to reduce risk and safeguard the continuation of teaching and learning
- Work with managed service providers to effectively plan ICT asset management, including rolling replacement planning, innovative classroom technology planning, and equipment disposal
- Support leaders and digital strategy champions to make informed decisions about the procurement of equipment and software outside of the scope of the planned asset management programme
- Develop, implement and monitor compliance with the Trust's various ICT policies and take appropriate action when policies are breached

# When you join EVAT, the media and marketing service will:

- Support leaders to develop internal and external communications, including crisis communications
- Develop publicity and promotional materials, including social media and websites, and ensure consistent Trust/school branding in line with branding guidelines
- Work with leaders to develop promotion/marketing materials to increase pupil intake and boost income
- Facilitate website hosting, development and maintenance
- Support leaders to promote events and celebrate success

# Advantages of joining EVAT

There are significant advantages to joining our Trust. They include:

- A strong track record in enabling and implementing sustainable school improvement strategies, improving Ofsted ratings
- 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 £26M per year and over £3M 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.

When joining our Trust, a central contribution (also known as a 'top slice') will be discussed 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, via the Trust's Executive Support Officer, Stephanie Blake, at sblake@educationvillage.org.uk

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