



# The STAR

## MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

**An introduction to The STAR Multi Academy Trust:  
our vision, values and offer to schools.**

**For school leaders and governors exploring the opportunities,  
support and benefits of being part of a multi-academy trust.**



**'Working together to strengthen our organisation, to further  
develop our expertise and to add value to the communities we serve.'**



## Meet the Trust

The Sherburn, Tadcaster And Rural Multi Academy Trust (The STAR MAT)

*We pride ourselves in being a **COMMUNITY** Trust rooted in our localities. This is not simply geographical; it is embedded in our ethos.*

**Our nine founder schools have a long history of working together for the benefit of our children and their families in the local area. This close working relationship led to the formation of a Teaching School Alliance in 2016, and the formation of the Trust in 2018, through a desire to further our own vision.**

Today we are a multi-academy trust made up of nine primary schools and two secondary schools, serving the Sherburn, Tadcaster and Selby locality of North Yorkshire.

Our schools include Church of England schools, a very small rural primary, and two large, two form entry primaries; alongside schools with nursery and wraparound care. Our secondary schools have both separate and consortium sixth form provision. Two schools within the Trust are sponsored with the rest being convertors.

While each of our academies retain their own individual identities, collectively we are committed to creating an inclusive learning environment where all children in our communities can shine.

Since our formation we are proud to have achieved a strong record with Ofsted following seven positive inspections during 2022/23. As an organisation with both primary and secondary schools we are able to offer strengths and expertise across all key stages, building models of curriculum progression and sharing pedagogy to benefit the outcomes and life chances for all our young people.



Further to our proven track record and strong offer to our schools, we are ready for appropriate and measured growth. We would like to talk to a small number of like-minded schools who are ready to explore opportunities to join a wider 'family' group in line with direction in the government's Schools White Paper published in March 2022, for every school to be in, or joining, a strong multi-academy trust by 2030.

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# Our vision, mission and values



## Our vision

To create an inclusive multi-academy trust where every child, young person and member of staff has the opportunity to flourish and realise their full potential.

## Our mission

To create a multi-academy trust that allows each of our academies to retain their own individual identities, and are able to create an inclusive learning environment where all of the children in our communities can shine. Utilising local and collective strengths, we want to achieve the best outcomes for our young people and employees.

## Our values

We believe that all of the children within our communities have a right to the same high standard of inclusive education. Collectively, we are committed to securing the very best outcomes for all our children and young people, so that they succeed in the future and contribute positively to the communities they live in.

We strive to develop leadership at all levels. Working together to share best practice for the benefit of all, we are committed to creating positive learning environments that allow our staff to develop professionally.

## Our aims for young people

- Ensure that our children achieve the best possible outcomes
- Develop the whole child; personally, culturally and spiritually
- Be inclusive; have a real commitment to our most vulnerable children
- Teach our children to live well together and to make wise choices
- Ensure that our children are safe from harm
- Work to ensure that our schools are enjoyable places for children to learn.

# How we work together

**At The STAR MAT there is no lead school. As a Trust built from the bedrock of a Teaching School Alliance it is important to understand that The STAR MAT is not a centralist organisation but rather one founded on collegiate or collegial principles:**

We are a trust of diverse schools that exist within a shared vision to provide the very highest standards of education. We believe that there is no one-size-fits-all solution for providing the best education, and although the academies in The STAR MAT are all within a short distance, each has different needs, has different challenges in improving academic outcomes, and has its own unique identity.

We uphold and value this identity, celebrating and nurturing similarities and differences of individual ethos and values. We firmly believe that effective education needs to be focused on a true understanding of the community that the school serves, and the community of the school itself.

Although all schools within The STAR MAT operate within an agreed framework, central to our approach is for each school to retain their local community identity. We believe that by utilising local and collective strengths we achieve the best outcomes for our young people and employees.

We do this by working in partnership with parents and other organisations that can positively contribute to our vision, and in keeping with our values of trust, openness and service.

We are a learning community bound together by vision, values and our Scheme of Delegation.







# Our core offer

**We are proud of the range and depth of services provided to our schools through our core offer. These include services directly provided by the Trust alongside some which have been carefully procured for all elements of best value.**

## School Improvement

We believe that the vast majority of what we do as an organisation must benefit our core vision and aims and therefore benefit our students. However, School Improvement also has a specific focus as defined in our School Improvement Strategy. This is led by the Chief Education Officer and the Strategic Leadership Group but has specific resource allocation in four key fields: school improvement consultant primary; school improvement consultant secondary; proactive support for project work and reactive support for any schools in need of structured input. In 2023 a Director of Education will be recruited to further support School Improvement.

We also provide many and various structured opportunities for professional development which impact on school improvement, from Early Careers Network, Deputy/Assistant Headteacher Network, subject groups, writing moderation, Early Years Practice Group.... a comprehensive list, linked to our strategic plan.

Curriculum development is a real driver for the Trust. In line with our founding principles, we have a set of Trust-wide agreed Curriculum Aims as well as an agreed framework of year group outcomes, but we allow schools their own identity in terms of curriculum implementation, with a range of opportunities to support leaders, teachers and quality assurance. This includes our successful internal Peer Review Deep Dive programme.

## Safeguarding, Inclusion, Equalities and Diversity and Student Wellbeing

A full-time core Central Team role is to provide strategy, drive, support and challenge in all of these vital student focused areas. All of our schools utilise CPOMS online child protection logging and our Single Central Records are held using SCR Tracker. We provide DSL and link governor support networks and DSL supervision through our outsourced Educational Psychologist contract. This contract also supports our SENDCO Network, personal development network and provides contracted advice and support to our schools outside of statutory work.

## Governance Service

Within the Multi-Academy Trust and school landscape an evolved and effective approach to governance is vital. You can find out more about governance roles and our Scheme of Delegation via the Trust website: [www.starmat.co.uk](http://www.starmat.co.uk)

We outsource governance advisory support, including clerking for our Local Governing Bodies, from Judicium Education. We also subscribe to NGA and The Key for School Leaders and Governors for all of our schools.

## Primary Assessment

Our primary schools operate assessment under an agreed Policy and Calendar; with a shared secondary policy under development. This includes the use of certain standardised tests which are provided as part of the Central Core Offer as is the analysis software. Currently we utilise RS Assessment PUMA, PIRA and SHINE interventions. We also use No More Marking National Assessments and utilise FFT Tracker in all primary schools, with FFT secondary tracker under development.

## Policy Development

Many of our policies have developed over time to become aligned as 'Trust Policies' - these have been progressed through a collaborative, consultative approach using the above services alongside a member of the Central Team who has a dedicated role in supporting schools with policy development.

## Financial Services

All schools utilise the IMP financial planning tool alongside Sage accountancy software. We provide training and support for all school based financial roles, but also have a central financial team who secure aspects such as account reconciliation, audit, financial planning assumptions and support schools in all aspects of reporting.

We are very proud that through these approaches we can support our schools in constantly refined three year projections. The STAR MAT does not pool income or reserves and assists schools and LGBs with the management information required to make informed decisions on where to spend resources.

## Human Resources and Payroll

HR advisory services are outsourced to provide an extremely effective service to both schools and the Central Trust Team on casework and overarching policy. Payroll is outsourced to Neopeople who provide a responsive service with an employee access portal ensuring ease of use and very high reliability. The Central Team also employs a Trust HR and Payroll Coordinator who works to facilitate and further progress all aspects of our work with our valuable workforce and who is available to support responsively. As a single employer we use a Trust-wide approach to recruitment with centrally available support and processes, online application and a Central Team Officer who facilitates all aspects of recruitment. We also provide a wide variety of employee benefits accessed through our 'inSTAR' employee portal.

## Estates, Health and Safety

As a sizeable Trust we will benefit from approximately £1.2million Schools Condition Allowance in 22/23. This is in addition to schools devolved formula capital. Our Estates team consists of our Estates Director and also an Estates Maintenance Manager. Our Estates Director drives forward our 10-year Estates Plan and project work at every school including compliance and improvement work. Schools have seen considerable improvement ranging from flooring and decoration, through refurbishments, to TCU replacements, new windows and replacement boilers. Every school has a 10-year plan and a safety action plan. Our Estates Maintenance Manager is there to support schools on a daily basis and get things fixed! Our Estates Team also have oversight of the whole of the Trust caretaking team at primary which is in house and of the cleaning contract which is outsourced to Bulloughs.

Our Health and Safety Advisory Service and Competent Body is outsourced. This contract supports document checks, fire safety risk assessments etc, but is in addition to compliance visits and training provided through our Estates Team.

All schools have electronic access control systems and InVentry visitor registration.

We also provide the Every training portal for health and safety and estates compliance training including legionella, asbestos, etc.

## Catering

From September 2022 we are proud to be bringing primary catering in-house under the brand STAR EATS. We have our own Executive Chef who supports menu development, standards and in school staff training and delivery, with all of the catering team becoming Team STAR. Our produce is locally sourced, orders placed online, and all nutritional standards and dietary requirements are of course met in full.

## Legal Services

Legal services are outsourced to a specialist educational provider for multi-academy trusts, Stoneking. With offices based in Leeds, Stoneking are on a retainer contract which allows us to seek legal advice across any aspect of school life from estates to health, uniform and contracts.

## Media Relations

We have both re-active (crisis communications) and pro-active contracts with Hamilton Communications to support our schools with press coverage.

## Educational Visits Guidance

We source our educational trips and visits guidance and training from North Yorkshire County Council and provide access to the Evolve online management tool for all of our schools.

## Digital Technology

Working with our outsourced partner TransforMAtive and our schools we are securing our infrastructure, connectivity and digital resilience as well as building a long-term plan for how technology can support and empower our organisation, our schools and our young people. We also provide direct support to our schools through contract provision of broadband, Smoothwall, backup solutions, Multi-factor authentication, Google Classrooms, MIS contracts and many more.

## Procurement and Compliance

This is provided through a role on the Central Team and also an outsourced contract to Veritau as our DPO. We support all individual school contract procurement exercises where required.



# Addressing the myths

## MATs are corporate and only interested in data and finance and not children and young people

As illustrated through our vision and aims, young people are at the heart of everything we do.

The bedrock of The STAR MAT as a community Trust is to make the very best positive impact, we can on young people's life chances.

Each iteration of our Strategic Plan further reinforces this (for further information on our Strategic Plan please visit: [www.starmat.uk](http://www.starmat.uk))

We do of course have a duty to financial probity and monitoring data as part of the set of indicators we agree with our schools. Further information can be found at: <https://web.starmat.uk/governance/statutory-documentation/>

## Academies and MATs are formed out of an ideology 'against' working with the Local Authority

This was certainly not the case for The STAR MAT.

We formed following a long foundation of effective working together and because we wanted to be able to accelerate our decision making, align systems and processes and demonstrate our commitment to our community through a substantial and long-lasting undertaking.

We continue to work closely with Local Authority partners, both from North Yorkshire and other areas on a range of strategic projects, considering this a vital part of our community focused approach.

## All schools in a Trust will be the same

At The STAR MAT we celebrate individual identity, vision and values under the umbrella of the Trust vision and principles.

Whilst many systems, processes and policies are aligned, schools set their own schemes of learning, have their own uniforms, timetables and distinct 'identity.'

## Experienced staff may be replaced by unqualified staff

There are various rules in place for staffing (such as QTS requirements, ratios for EYFS, etc) and some of these changes when a school becomes an academy. At The STAR MAT we firmly believe in the best person for a role being in place at all times. We will always look to employ highly qualified, skilled staff and through our career progression framework will also look to progress staff including to National Professional Qualifications and additional training including appropriate use of our comprehensive Apprenticeship Levy Programme

## After TUPE expires, the Trust will change employee terms and conditions

The STAR MAT is a people focused organisation. Any proposed changes post-TUPE are carried out adhering to consultation practices. We have local union representation and a Trust- level Joint Consultation and Negotiation Committee which meets with regional union colleagues, similar to the model in Local Authorities

## What about employment terms?

Since we moved to form a multi-academy trust, we have worked with our union partners to ensure all statutory terms are fully protected. We have always fully honoured national and regional pay negotiation outcomes and wherever and whenever possible looked to implement policy which positively enhances that which was previously in place - improving leave, family friendly policy, flexible working, to name a few. For example, in 2022/23 we have moved to support the Real Living Wage, we have also implemented staff pay increments in September, well ahead of the DfE timeframe. When vacancies are advertised internally, they are ordinarily advertised across the Trust, thereby creating more career opportunities for staff.

## Staff pensions may be affected

If a school joins The STAR MAT, all pensions remain with the same pension provider and with the same arrangements that were in place before conversion. We do provide the additional option of a salary sacrifice shared cost AVC within the Local Government Pension Scheme for non-teaching staff.

## Some existing land may be sold off

All land is still owned by the Local Authority or Diocese and any sale would require their and Secretary of State approval. In effect this would only take place through a local housing strategy implementation.

## Aren't Multi-Academy Trusts for failing schools?

The STAR MAT was formed by a group of schools looking to positively influence their own destiny. It is true that a strong multi-academy trust may be asked to consider sponsoring and undertaking 'due diligence' on a school which has been in receipt of an Ofsted category. However, many schools have embraced the strength and support that comes from being part of a family with a shared vision and shared endeavour; especially in times when Local Authority resources have been less readily available.

## The Governing Body will no longer have any status

Our Local Governing Bodies have an absolutely vital role to play in our governance structure. Our LGBs have six formal meetings per year with no formal committees. There is a clear agenda planner which actively engages governors in 'active governance' between meetings, working alongside school staff to provide challenge and support and reporting back to their LGB. Information on governance in The STAR MAT can be found at <https://web.starmat.uk/governance/> However, a more detailed discussion, including with any of our chairs, can be facilitated.

## The academy system has more money

Our academies are funded through the General Academies Grant. To all intents and purposes this results in the same amount of per pupil and net funding as with maintained schools. However, part of our Trust Core Offer is built around helping schools become more financially effective, efficient, leveraging economies of scale and increasing the amount of money available to you, to spend on front line teaching and learning.

We do have significantly more capital finance through School Condition Allowance, though since we have this direct funding, we cannot bid to the DfE or Local Authorities for any project work.

## A Multi-Academy Trust is just a corporate business

Trusts are not businesses - nor are they run by 'private' people. Trusts are education charities that are set up purely for the purpose of running and improving schools. Trustees have strict duties under charity law and company law. Trustees hold public office - they do not run the trust for 'private' interest but are required to advance education for public benefit. They are required to uphold the Nolan Principles of Public Life.

## There will be less accountability within a Multi-Academy Trust

Trusts are highly accountable. Trusts are held to account to a higher standard than maintained schools. The obligation of transparency and accountability is much greater than maintained schools. They are held to account by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), Ofsted and Regional Schools Commissioners. They are required to have an independent audit annually and to publish their accounts. They are also required to disclose pay in thresholds. If the ESFA investigates a trust, the investigation report is published on the government's website. There is no similar requirement on local authorities to publish investigation reports or disclose head teacher pay.

## The Trust will implement selective admissions and not be inclusive

Trusts must comply with the same law on admissions as maintained schools. Our funding agreement requires STAR MAT to comply in full with the DfE School Admissions Code and the law relating to admissions.

Trusts are subject to most of the same direct statutory duties as maintained mainstream schools in respect of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). As such, we will always:

- Have regard to the statutory SEND Code of Practice;
- Use their best endeavours to make sure a child with SEND gets the support they need;
- Designate a qualified teacher to be the SENCO;
- Co-operate with the local authority in respect of the child;
- Admit a child where the school is named on that child's Education, Health and Care plan;
- Ensure that children, young people and their families are involved in decision-making and planning.



# Why The STAR MAT?



**Trusts are specialist organisations set up specifically to run and improve schools – there are very clear lines of accountability in the School Trust model – it is our sole reason for being.**

At The STAR MAT, we are one entity set up to improve and maintain high educational standards across our school community. We work as a powerful and creative collaborative, where we truly believe that as a group of schools working together, we can do many things that are harder for stand-alone schools to do:

- **Teachers work and learn together to improve the way they teach;**
- **Schools share practices that make a difference to the quality of teaching;**
- **Teachers and leaders can work together on the things that matter – like curriculum and assessment;**
- **Struggling schools can improve;**
- **It is easier for teachers and leaders to move to another school to help improve the quality of education where that school is struggling – and these moves are more likely to be to schools with more disadvantaged pupils; and**
- **It is more possible to be efficient and thereby to invest money in supporting pupils to have wider opportunities.**

Our strength comes from being 'built' and driven by our core vision, aims and principles – putting young people first, being focused on empowering our workforce to make the difference to every young person's outcome and life chances. We are a truly collegiate organisation, constantly evolving where every voice helps shape the next steps we take.

This presents an exciting opportunity for any new school exploring the opportunities of joining The STAR MAT but a commitment and investment that we believe will be returned many fold over.

**We would like to hear from you. To find out more please email [CEO@starmat.uk](mailto:CEO@starmat.uk)  
The STAR MAT, Rose Cottage, Toulston, Tadcaster, LS24 9NB  
Telephone: 01937 538538**

# What our school staff say about The STAR MAT

'As a new headteacher to The STAR MAT, I have been impressed with the level of support and engagement from the Trust. This has enabled me to settle quickly and hit the ground running to best meet the needs of my school. I can see how the school and its community has benefitted from being part of something bigger which allows us to grow as a school with the collective support of the Trust, which is invaluable in these challenging times.' **HT, RS**

'I started working for The STAR MAT in September 2022. One of the reasons I applied for the post was that The STAR MAT is a multi academy trust that allows each academy to retain their own individual identities. It is also a trust that genuinely cares about our staff's wellbeing'. **DHT, TGS**

'I owe my teaching career to The STAR MAT. Following a career change during the pandemic, I was recruited, trained and subsequently placed within a school of the alliance. Throughout my time here, I have felt supported and encouraged to become the best and more reflective practitioner I can be. As an ECT, I am excited to continue to work within the Trust and progress through my teaching journey.' **ECT, MF**

'I started my career here at TGS following my PGCE placement and have felt supported here on every step of my journey from ECT to Year Leader. I have been given a range of opportunities to take part in wider CPD both in house, across the trust and through exam boards to develop my knowledge and expertise both in a pastoral role and as a history teacher. Trust led subject reviews have helped to develop our curriculum and the support has really helped to develop my practice to become a confident history teacher, more knowledgeable in how to achieve the best outcomes for my students. I really feel lucky to work in such a dynamic school and Trust, in which I have been able to progress in my career and continue to do so.'

**Year Leader and history lead, TGS**

'As a headteacher with experience of working in multiple MATs, I have found my six-year association with the The STAR MAT as rewarding, challenging and supportive. Having been through and part of the journey of forming The STAR MAT into what it is today, I am proud to represent our family of schools. Young people in The STAR MAT are not just a number. They are valued and included. We collectively work to provide the best opportunities that we can offer through collaboration of expertise and resources across our differing settings and The STAR MAT is a great place to work for anyone with a passion for education.' **HT, SHP**

'The MAT mission of developing outstanding education for each student lives and breathes every day. As a group of schools, we are truly stronger together and have the needs and aspirations of all of our students at the forefront of our thoughts, actions and decision making.' **Headteacher, TGS**



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