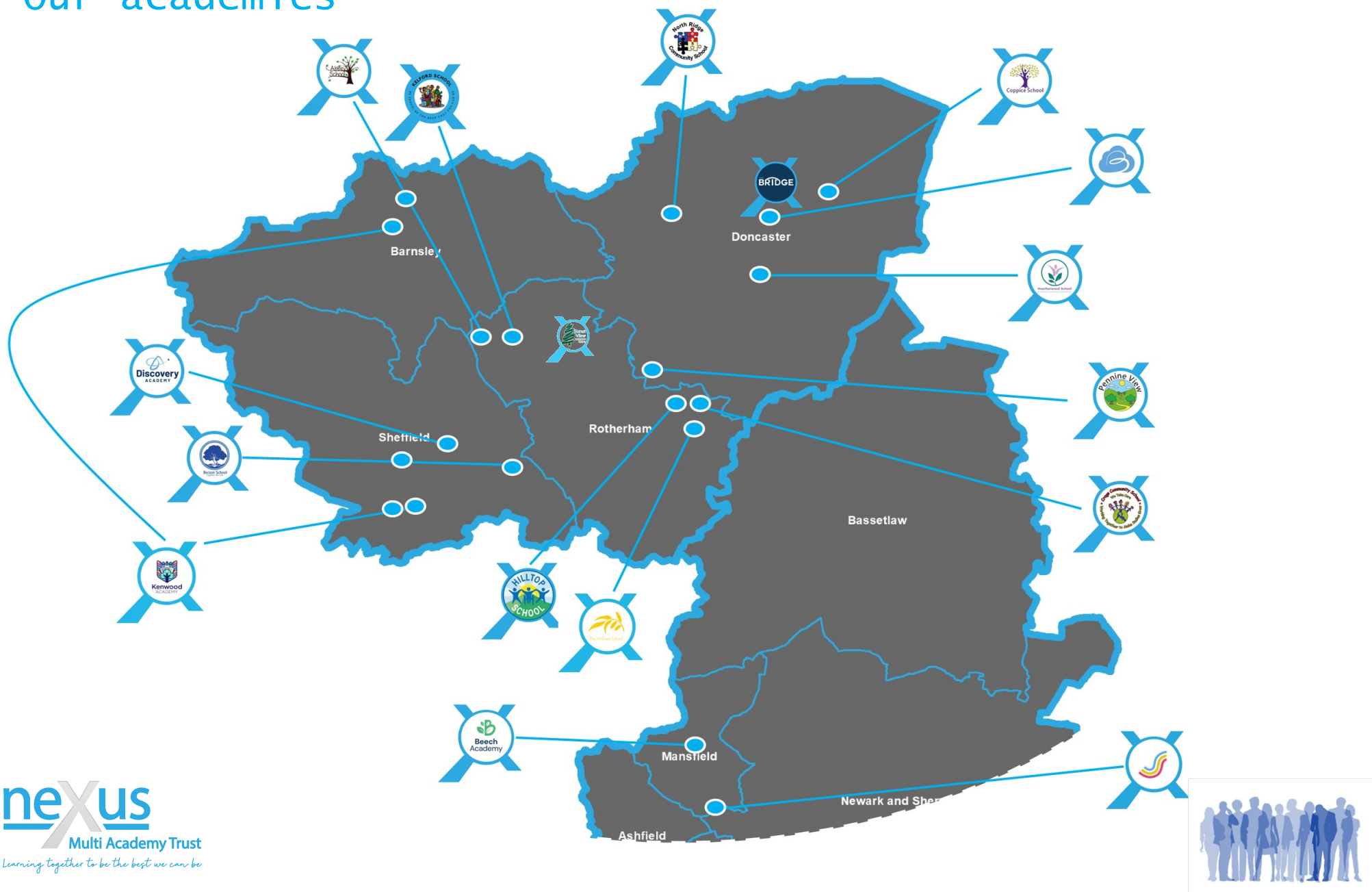




Workforce Engagement Statement 2022-23

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

Our academies



Employee Voice



In the spring of 2022 the Board of Directors commissioned the second ever Employee Opinion Survey, a continuation of the work started in 2020 to ensure there is a systematic means of capturing and reporting on employee voice to the Trust's legal governors.

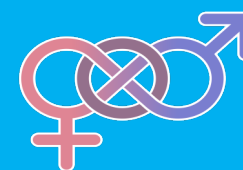
43% of the workforce completed the survey, a decline of 32% compared to 2020 return. Whilst this was disappointing, the survey was rolled out at a time of acute workforce absence due to the pandemic and it is likely operational activity was prioritised by the majority of the workforce. The Trust has 1003 employees, 27% of which are teachers and 73% are non-teachers. 19% of respondents to the survey were teachers, and 81% were non-teachers.

Overall results from the survey were very positive for the Trust, with 80% or more agreeing that they are treated with fairness and respect; they are passionate to work in education; they find their job rewarding; and they are proud to work for school.

Over 80% of respondents also agreed that they trust that their school is being effectively governed, and believe that school policies and procedures help staff have a positive impact on outcomes.

67% of staff felt a sense of belonging to the Trust, a 16% decrease since the 2020 survey. However, the period since the last survey has been defined by lockdowns and school "bubble" measures, with the Trust making a deliberate effort to support schools through the pandemic rather than undertaking self-promotional work and/or visiting schools routinely. This in turn has impacted on collaboration between the Trust and our schools, so a reduction in a sense of belonging feels like a natural and unavoidable consequence. The next survey will take place in spring 2024.





Workforce Profile

As of 31 August 2023, the Trust employs 1,107 individuals across our 14 academies and the central Trust team. The Willows School staff are not included in these figures.

Our most recent gender pay report states that 84% of the workforce identify as female with 16% male. 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 those roles. A high proportion of our staff, given the number of special schools, are teaching assistants and a high proportion of those staff are female. Whilst we believe that many of those staff actively choose those roles for the job satisfaction and flexibility they offer, we also ensure that we survey our workforce routinely on their perceptions of gender as a determining factor in pay and progression.

25% of the workforce are aged under 30, 44% are aged 31-49, 29% are aged 50-64 and 2% are 65 or over. 94.2% of our workforce identify as white British or white other, with 5.8% identifying as dual or of BAME heritage.

In 2022-23, Nexus MAT recorded 10,748 days lost to sickness (7.32% of total working days available). The majority of these days were related to sickness instances that lasted less than 20 days. 291 employees met some form of sickness absence trigger, which necessitates a response in line with the Trust's Sickness Absence & Wellbeing Policy. 320 sanctions were issued for poor staff attendance. 1 employee was dismissed under this policy.



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.

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 strong history of utilising the Government's apprenticeship levy as the entry point to our employment pyramid, being named 2020 Employer of the Year by Rotherham and North Nott's College. 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 developed a training directory for the Nexus Learning Institute, drawing together all of the expertise available across our academies, which was launched in September 2022. One element of this is 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.

In February 2023, the Trust hosted its third MAT-wide conference, bringing our employee workforce together for the first time in three years.

Appraisal and Professional Development Reviews are available to all staff where professional areas of interest can be shared and appropriate training sourced.

We continue to have a close working relationship with local teaching school networks. We also work closely with regional universities, and from September 2023 we will be piloting a new level 3 apprenticeship programme for our teaching assistant workforce, in partnership with Waterton Academy Trust. We also have membership of the National College and their plethora of online learning materials are available for our workforce.



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 CEO.

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 other academies and to consider things like secondments to other schools in the Trust. Through 2022-23 we facilitated a number of secondments and will continue to provide this in future years. We also have a regular jobs bulletin that is shared with all staff, outlining all vacancies across our schools.

In September 2020 we established our network groups, bringing staff together from across the Trust around a common area of expertise or the curriculum. Our Staff Parliament provides a platform for our school staff governors to connect, and in 2022-23, in addition to our cross-Trust conference, we also held two cross-school pupil Olympics, which brought our staff together.

Our online Portal enables all staff to share practice or research so that we are ‘learning together’.



A commitment to employee wellbeing



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.

In 2020-21 we developed our Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) framework, which outlines our commitment to our pupils and our staff to recognise needs and support improved wellbeing.

The Trust has committed to the DfE's Education Staff Wellbeing Charter, which will ensure we are using an objective framework, developed by Government, to self-assess against and plan future improvement activity.

In line with this, the Trust commissioned an Employee Assistance Programme from September 2022, which provides all staff with a range of support services and resources. All staff are able to access 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 launched a range of employee social clubs, based on the areas of interest suggested by the Staff Parliament. The Trust routinely issues a 'Feel Better' newsletter and we also have a "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 embark on the first three years of this journey, working together across all elements of our organisation and with our pupils, families and communities at the centre.

Our first step is to baseline our carbon emissions and we are engaging our school communities in this work to understand where those emissions are coming from, the impact they have on our world, and how we can all work to reduce them.

The work is already resulting in projects to decarbonise our buildings through projects such as LED lighting systems, moving to a renewable energy provider across the Trust, and encouraging employees to access the cycle to work scheme. Our young people are at the heart of 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 developing our new West Riding campus in 2022-23, we have also pioneered the inclusion of biophilic design in our schools to put nature at the heart of our pupils' learning.



