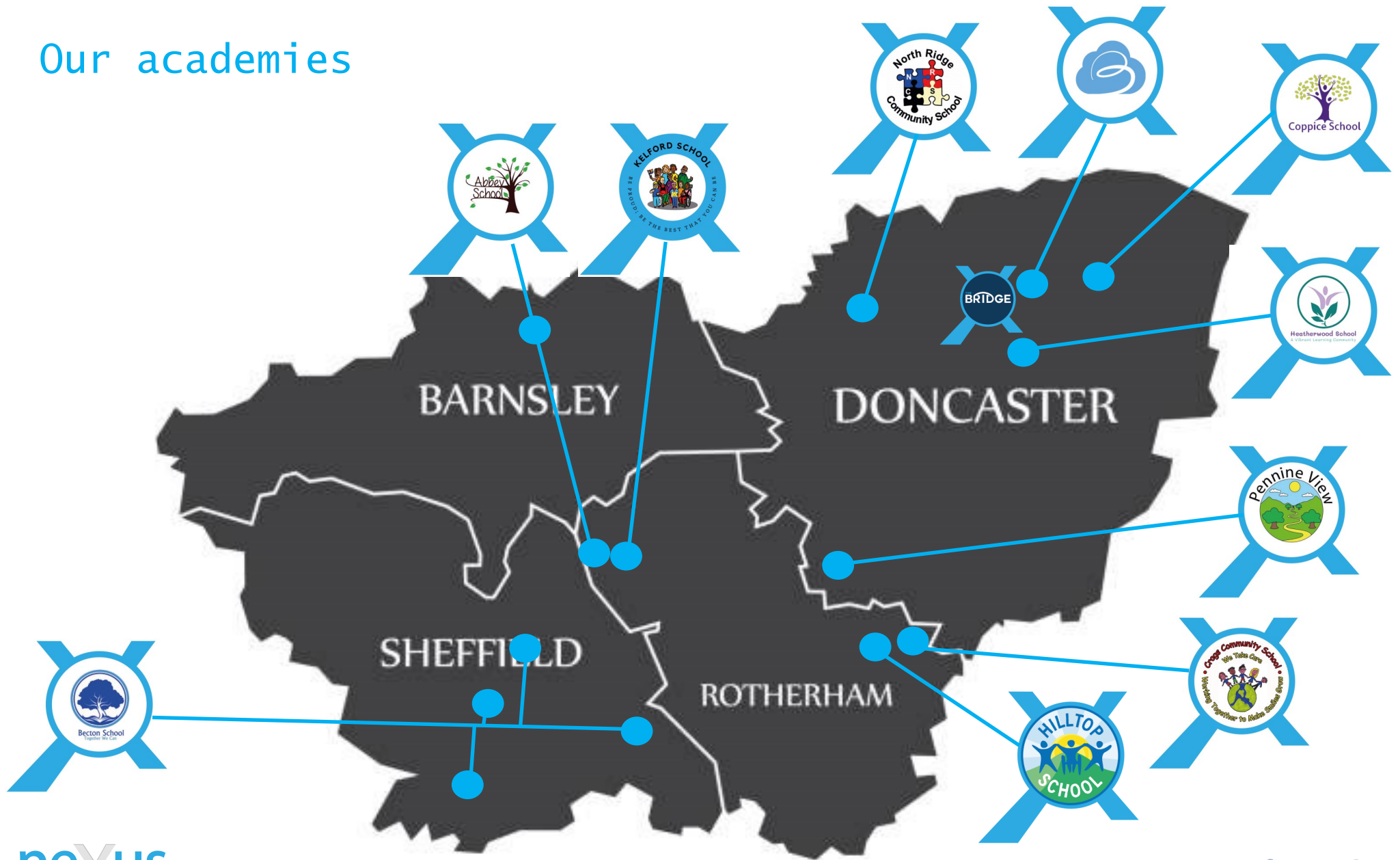




Workforce Engagement Statement 2021

Our academies



Evolution of the Trust

1 June 2016 - Nexus MAT is founded by Abbey, Hilltop and Kelford schools



1 April 2017 - Pennine View School is sponsored and joins Nexus MAT



1 October 2019 - Crags Community School converts and joins Nexus MAT



1 November 2019 - Heatherwood School converts and joins Nexus MAT



1 December 2019 - Coppice School converts and joins Nexus MAT



1 April 2020 - Becton & North Ridge schools convert and join Nexus MAT



1 September 2020 - Bader Academy opens



Employee Voice



In the spring of 2020 the Board of Directors commissioned North Yorkshire County Council to undertake the inaugural Employee Opinion Survey, a decision taken to ensure that there was absolute security for staff of independent analysis and reporting of their responses as openness, honesty and integrity are core pillars of the Trust's commitment to ethical leadership.

75% of the workforce completed the survey, with benchmarking data telling us that organisations of our size could expect 70-80% as a very high response rate. Overall results from the survey were very positive for the Trust with the majority of survey responses in the Strongly Agree and Agree categories and job satisfaction level agreement over 90%. 31% of the workforce have been employed for 11 years or more.

Overall, the 'Vision, Mission and Values' of Nexus all rated highly, with exceptionally agree and strongly agree data. 96% of employees agreed with the statement "I would like to see employees of the Trust come together to collaborate and share achievements". 89% agreed with the statement "I believe the School offers me opportunity for development and growth". 92% of staff agreed with the statements "I am enabled and empowered to contribute my views" and "Senior leaders in school do a good job of keeping me informed about matters affecting me".

Finally, 83% of staff agreed that they "feel a sense of belonging to the Trust", a remarkably positive response given the majority of staff had only joined the Trust in the preceding 2-6 months.





Workforce Profile

As of July 2021, the Trust employs 846 individuals across our 10 academies and the central Trust team. Our most recent gender pay report states that 85% of the workforce identify as female with 15% male. There is a gender pay gap for both mean and median pay levels. We are confident that this is principally due to the high proportion of female employees in the lower quartile of paid roles in the Trust – rather than a gender disparity within those roles. For example, 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 recognise the structural and societal aspects that can lead to a higher proportion of females in roles in the lower quartile of pay.

22% of the workforce are aged 18-30, 34% are aged 31-44, 37% are aged 45-59 and 7% are 60 or over. 96% of our workforce identify as white British or white other, with 1% identifying as dual or of BAME heritage. 3% prefer not to identify.

In 2021-21, Nexus MAT recorded an average of 8.16 days lost to sickness (not including COVID-19), with 3.29 days lost specifically due to COVID. The CIPD most recent report¹ states that the public sector average for 2019-20 was 8 days lost sickness. More recent data is yet to be published, and no data is specifically published for COVID in the most recent CIPD report. Given the high % of employees on furlough or home working, the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) also reported 2020 as the lowest-ever average sickness absence rate in the 20-year history of their survey.

¹https://www.cipd.co.uk/Images/health-and-well-being-2020-report_tcm18-73967.pdf





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 enrolls all staff in either the Teacher PENSION Scheme or the Local Government Pension Scheme.

In 2020, the Trust deviated from Green Book pay when we awarded a discretionary 2% pay **increase** for all employees on those terms and conditions. The Board of Directors took this decision because of the inflationary rise awarded to teachers in 2020-21. Following an unprecedented year of challenge for all sectors with the COVID-19 pandemic, Directors believed it was inequitable to award teaching staff an inflationary rise in 2020-21 and not those staff on Green Book terms and conditions.

For future years, the Trust has committed to maintain alignment with all aspects of the Green Book, and will re-align pay levels over time, once the public sector pay freeze ends and inflationary awards are agreed with the Government and re-introduced that would catch them up.

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 when advertising jobs. This does generate some disparity in pay 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.



Working through the Coronavirus pandemic



Coronavirus has impacted on all our lives, touching all four corners of the globe. Many have lost loved ones, whilst many more have had to endure turbulent times of changing Government guidance and restrictions on civil liberties, all in the name of infection control.

In March 2020, the Prime Minister made a statement that all state schools would be closing their gates for the foreseeable future as British society entered its first lockdown. However, this wasn't the case for any of our schools, as many families needed the offer of a school day and we had a legal obligation to offer places to pupils who fit the Government definition of vulnerable.

Without the dedication and resilience of our workforce, we could not have met the needs of the families we serve. Thanks to their efforts, 100% of our families received the offer they wanted or needed, not only during term time but also throughout the school holidays

In the autumn of 2020, the Trust invested thousands of pounds in purchasing the flu vaccine for our workforce, with staff given the option to have this at school.

Wherever possible, Headteachers supported staff in working flexibly where dependents needed to isolate, with no staff going unpaid because of unavoidable absence.



Continuous professional learning & development



2020-21 saw a step change in the way our Trust enables and facilitates workforce development across our Trust, and this will develop further in 2021-22.

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 new Early Career Framework, supporting both our Early Career Teachers and their Mentors.

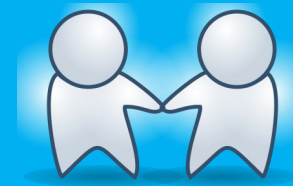
The central Trust team has developed a training directory, drawing together all of the expertise available across our academies, and this will be launched in September 2021. In conjunction with this, we are also launching our future leaders programme - Generation NeXt - which will be offered to our aspiring senior leaders in conjunction with the national professional qualifications that staff are encouraged to access. In addition, all staff receive a high quality induction when they join the Trust.

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 Learners First, and the Trust is also a named strategic partner of the new Teaching School Hub being led by Delta Academy Trust across Barnsley & Doncaster. This will open more opportunities for our staff to share their expertise and access new development pathways.



Employment relations



Whilst good employment relations is in the DNA of our Trust, we also have formal systems in place to ensure that this is in place.

The Trust expects both teaching and non-teaching staff to have representation on local governing bodies with two staff governor positions enshrined in our terms of reference, and we actively seek to fill any and all vacancies as they emerge.

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.

For September 2021 the Trust is also establishing a Joint Consultative and Negotiating Committee (JCNC) with the unions to improve our partnership working.





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 survey 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 2020-21, we facilitated a number of secondments in response.

In September 2020 we established our network groups, bringing staff together from across the Trust around a common area of expertise or the curriculum. We also created our mandate groups, to drive forward shared initiatives and policy development. This work will continue to be a key driver for collaboration in future years, as we enshrine collegiate working arrangements into our developing Trust Parliament (based on the Schools Parliament model).

The development of the Portal enables all staff to share practice or research so that we are 'learning together' and our Extranet provides a 'one stop shop' for information, guidance or support. Both the Portal and Extranet will ensure a more systematic virtual connection between our academies and workforce.



A commitment to employee wellbeing



The employee opinion survey told us that staff feel well supported and cared for, but this is an areas 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 Department for Education'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.

The Trust commissions Occupational Health expertise to support employee wellbeing as one facet of our Sickness and Wellbeing offer, and from September 2021 we will have an enhanced Human Resources offer to better support Trust and school leaders in their support of our staff. We have also developed an extensive emotional wellbeing area of the Trust website with resources for staff and families.





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.



