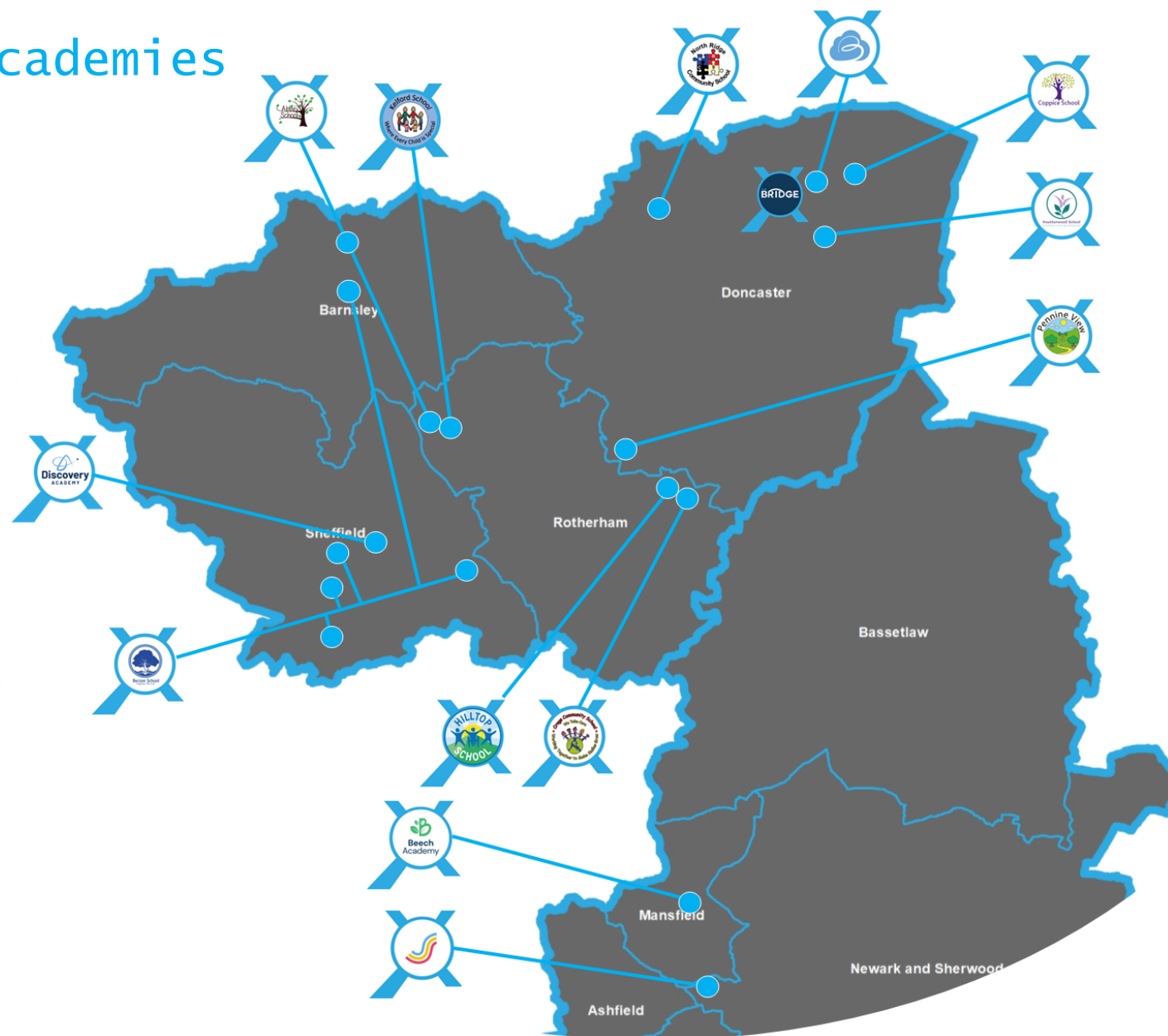




Workforce Engagement Statement

2021-22

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 - Craggs 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



1 September 2022 - Discovery Academy opens, Beech Academy & Fountainsdale School convert and join Nexus MAT



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.





Workforce Profile

As of 1 September 2022, the Trust employs 1,104 individuals across our 13 academies and the central Trust team.

Our most recent gender pay report states that 82% of the workforce identify as female with 15% male and 3% who prefer not to say. 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.

30% of the workforce are aged 16-30, 32% are aged 31-45, 32% are aged 46-60 and 6% are 61 or over. 94% of our workforce identify as white British or white other, with 1% identifying as dual or of BAME heritage. 5% prefer not to identify.

In 2021-22, Nexus MAT recorded an average of 6.78 days lost to sickness (not including COVID-19), with a further 3.52 days lost specifically due to COVID. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) reported that in 2021-22 an average of 4.6 days were lost due to sickness (including an average of 1.1 days specifically related to Covid-19). This is an increase of 0.4% from 2020-21. Although the figures for Nexus MAT are more than double the national average, all our schools remained open where many settings could support home working.



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.

It is anticipated that the Trust will realign with national levels effective 1 April 2022, once the pay increase has been agreed between the Government and Trades Unions.

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.

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 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 from September 2022. One element of this is our future leaders programme - Generation NeXt - which was rolled out to aspiring senior leaders in conjunction with the national professional qualifications that staff are encouraged to access via our Teaching School Hub partnerships.

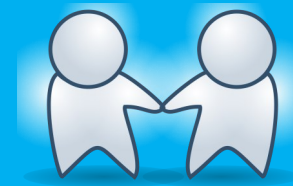
In February 2023, the Trust will also host a MAT-wide conference, bringing our circa 1k employee workforce together for the first time in three years.

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 Learners First, and the Trust is also a named strategic partner of the new Exchange Teaching Hub being led by Delta Academy Trust across Barnsley & Doncaster.



Employment enablement



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

The Trust expects both teaching and non-teaching staff to have representation on Local Governing Bodies and/or Academy Councils, 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.

The Trust is also 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 come 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 2021-22 we facilitated a number of secondments and will continue to provide this in future years.

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. From September 2022 will establish our staff parliament, building on the pioneering work of our Trust Pupil Parliament and Cabinet.

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 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 has also commissioned an Employee Assistant Programme from September 2022, which will provide staff with a range of support services and resources. At the same time, we are working with Headteachers to understand what additional wellbeing activity the Trust can commission or coordinate to better support positive mental health, such as Yoga sessions or access to Cognitive Behavioural Therapy techniques to enable preventative steps to be taken to avoid a mental health decline.





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.



