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**APR Lead and Assistant SENDCO**

**Recruitment Pack**

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# Letter from Mr Farmer, Principal at Stratton Upper School

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for responding to our advertisement. We are looking to appoint a compassionate and optimistic individual to join our school and wider Trust community, who will play a role in moving our school to Good and beyond. Stratton is a vibrant Upper School with around 900 students on roll. Due to considerable housing development within and around Biggleswade, the school is set to grow significantly. From September 2024 the school will become a full secondary school admitting years 7 & 8, with a change of name to Stratton School. The school has a capacity for up to 1650 students.

We are proud of our successful Sixth Form and the breadth of curriculum we are able to offer our post-16 students. In every respect we are a truly comprehensive school with a full ability range. As the only provider of Key Stage 4 and 5 education in the town, our challenge is to move effortlessly between preparing Year 13 students for top universities to working with students who, without our support, would have rejected the concept of education. Our students are our best advertisement, although closely followed by our dedicated, creative and passionate staff.

Stratton Upper School joined the Meridian Trust in October 2020. The successful applicant will not only join a strong and growing team at Stratton Upper School but also be part of a wider network across our family of schools.

If you think you can make a contribution to our community of staff and students and would like to work and learn in a continuously improving school and as part of a wider trust, then we would be delighted to receive your application. We ask that supporting statements do not exceed two sides of A4.

We hope you will want to work with us and look forward to hearing from you. Whatever your decision, we wish you good fortune in your search for the right post.

A signature of a plane

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Sam Farmer

Principal





# **Welcome from our Principal, Sam Farmer**

A person with red hair and beard wearing glasses

Description automatically generatedMy journey to Stratton has taken me to many exciting schools and differing roles over my 20 years in education. I am an English teacher at heart but have also enjoyed opportunities to teach a variety of subjects over the years.

 I challenge every child at Stratton to be the best they can be, and we promote a ‘can do’ culture in which everyone is encouraged to strive for excellence. We work in partnership with parents and carers to uphold the traditional values of respect and tolerance, resulting in harmony within our community, where the contribution of every individual is valued.

Stratton Upper School is proud to be at the heart of its community and we have a long history of supporting our students in achieving their goals.

We are committed to nurturing the abilities of every student in order to equip them with the qualifications and personal skills they need to become confident, independent adults and successful citizens of tomorrow.

At Stratton, we set the highest expectations in terms of learning and behaviour, and follow a broadly academic curriculum that includes English, mathematics, science, humanities and languages supplemented with strong provision in the arts and technology. Most students join our thriving Sixth Form, with many progressing to university. However, recognising that some individuals’ abilities lie in other areas, we provide a wealth of opportunities and courses that allow every student to develop and showcase his or her unique talents.

I warmly invite you to visit the school to experience for yourself its positive atmosphere and the excellent opportunities it offers students.

A football field with white markings

Description automatically generated

A brilliant view of the new 3G Muga (opened in October 2023) and surrounding school buildings. We are very fortunate to have such an amazing school site and phenomenal resources.

# About Stratton Upper School

Stratton Upper is currently a 13 to 19 school with a roll of around 800 students. This includes approximately 100 students in our Sixth Form. We are the only upper school serving Biggleswade and the surrounding villages. This has both advantages and responsibilities. Our unequivocal responsibility, however, is to ensure that we support the needs of all

students within our catchment. It follows that we accommodate students from across the full spectrum of ability and that we are truly inclusive.

A consultation has recently been undertaken by Central Bedfordshire to move schools in Biggleswade from three tier to two tier and as part of this consultation MAT and Stratton Upper School have developed plans for Stratton Upper School to admit students in Year 7 and 8 and continue to provide an excellent sixth form offer for the whole of Biggleswade. From September 2024 the school will be known as Stratton School and will be a full secondary school admitting students from year 7 through to year 11.

We are continuing an ambitious programme to raise standards, transform our curriculum and help our students realise what they are truly capable of achieving. Our ambition for school improvement continues with even more purpose, driven by our commitment to open as many opportunities for our students as we can.

To achieve our vision, we guide our students to be self-motivated, enthusiastic learners who are equipped and inspired to love learning throughout life as much as we do.

In practice, our approach is based on high expectations, high aspirations and high levels of trust. Our starting point is our working assumption that staff and students alike are committed to personal fulfilment and expect to work in an environment of success and respect.

We recruit professionals who share our vision, knowing that schools thrive on quality relationships between staff and students.

The holistic experience of being a Stratton student is of vital importance to

us. Our staff are incredibly giving of their time, which means, we can offer a vibrant, extracurricular range of activities. Our latest humanitarian visit in August 2018 to Costa Rica. Unfortunately, our planned trip to Cambodia in 2020 had to be cancelled.

Performing and visual arts are a strength with regular multimedia exhibitions, drama, music and dance productions. Our sports facilities are excellent and support a full range of individual and team sports and we have recently partnered with the Norwich City FC Regional Development Programme to offer a football programme to our post16 students.

We also have an ambition and drive to become a centre of STEM excellence within the local authority.

# General Information

Our Stratton catchment area incorporates the town of Biggleswade and a number of small villages in the Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire countryside. Biggleswade lies on the A1 and mainline railway, making it an ideal town for commuting into London (35 min to King's Cross). Other centres of employment include Cambridge, Bedford, Stevenage, Milton Keynes and Peterborough. Each of these towns and cities are accessible within 45 min travel time from Biggleswade. Employment in Biggleswade has traditionally been in market gardening and engineering. Both these industries still have a presence in the area but are no longer the significant employers they once were.

Biggleswade has expanded over the years. Population has increased and is expected to continue to rise by at least 25%. We are already seeing significant economic investment in the town. Biggleswade has been featured in a number of national newspapers as *the* place to live, combining with its strong communication links, reasonable house prices and of course, good schools!

Our new science centre opened in September 2017 and has provided an amazing learning space for our students.

The welfare and well-being of all members of our community is of central importance and we expect staff, pupils and students to give high priority to the needs of others and their development.

The school is known for its strong pastoral care and support for students with special educational needs and disabilities.

We aspire to be a school where learning is fun and fosters the joy of learning within the boundaries of good order and discipline.

# Staff Development

Stratton Upper School places a great deal of emphasis on the continual development of its colleagues. We are an outward facing school and play a significant role in the following organisations that are beyond the comprehensive support and professional development delivered through our Trust which can be seen on the MAT website, https://www.meridiantrust.co.uk

The Biggleswade Community Union of Schools (BCUS) an association of all education providers in our area dedicated to developing seamless education provision from ages 0 to 19.

**Welcome from our CEO, Mark Woods**



Thank you for your interest in joining the Meridian Trust family.

The success and growth of our Trust has been based on remaining focused on some critical principles:

* Every child is known, equally valued and supported to achieve their potential in all our academies. Every community we serve benefits from the facilities and services we provide.
* Our staff benefit from strong networks, excellent career opportunities and a human approach where they are equally valued and supported.
* We ensure that well-run schools retain and develop their distinct contextual identity, while sharing and contributing to our common values, practices, curriculum approaches and operational systems

Since 2011, thanks to the fantastic work of our staff, our Trust has grown from 1 to 30 academies whilst retaining our focus on working within an area that enables easy movement between our schools. From first developing an application in 2007 to open schools in the new town of Northstowe, we have been committed to the vision of being an all-through and all-inclusive Trust. Our Trust currently consists of 14 primary schools, 13 secondary schools and 3 special schools. We are also currently developing 3 free school projects within our region.

Meridian also plays a key role in the wider development of education in the region. We are the home to the Cambridge and Peterborough Teaching School Hub and operate a vibrant Initial Teaching Training provider that trains upwards of 100 teachers annually. In addition, our commitment to the local community as an extension of our village college ethos means that we host a range of activity in our schools, including providing leisure and educational opportunities.

If being part of a dynamic, compassionate and dedicated group who believe we can really improve young people’s life chances and opportunities by working together appeals to you, we very much look forward to receiving your application.

# **A Brief History**

Meridian Trust, formerly known as Cambridge Meridian Academies Trust (CMAT), is a values-led Trust and has risen to be one of the highest performing academy groups in the country. Our Trust was first formed as an educational trust to create a federation of schools in 2006 with a desire to provide high quality and dynamic education for everyone, right in the heart of our community. Through various government policies, our commitment to collaboration has remained consistent.

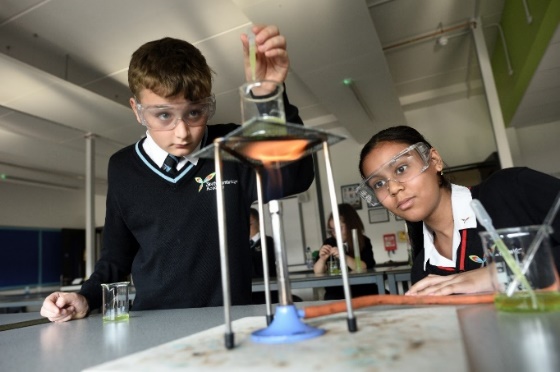
Meridian Trust was formed in 2011 to deliver more widely on that clear vision to provide high quality and dynamic education for all at the heart of the communities we serve. Our steady growth since then reflects our commitment to the communities we serve and our track record of success. The period since 2018 has seen an increase in speed of growth as many long term projects matured and our relationship with Sharnbrook Academy Federation emerged.

We are currently a family of 30 academies (including 14 primary, 3 special and 13 secondary schools). The secondary schools include a University Technology College, an Upper School, four 11-16 schools and six 11-18 schools. We also have 2 new secondary free schools in development. All within 20 miles of Cambridge and Peterborough and the main communication routes between. We merged with Cambridge Primary Education Trust to become the Meridian Trust in April 2022. In addition to operating schools, we are the home of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Teaching School Hub, and train more than 150 new teachers each year through Meridian Trust ITT. We retain a strong commitment to growing and supporting staff throughout their training and career development. We have a proven track record of school improvement and transforming the lives of children and young people over the last 10 years.

Students thrive in Meridian Trust academies as a result of the implementation of our values, our successful and proven systems and our commitment to valuing people. We are among the highest performing multi-academy trusts in the country for student progress. Our academies are well-run and our staff benefit from excellent access to professional development.

Our commitment to the education system goes beyond just our own academies. We operate ’The Cambridge Partnership‘, one of the largest initial teacher training providers in the country which has recently merged with the SAF ITT, and ‘Leadership East’ these further strengthen our capacity and commitment to professional development. We also provide support through various SLAs to a number of other trusts and academies.

As a strong, regional multi-academy trust we currently operate schools across Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Lincolnshire, Peterborough, and Northamptonshire. We are proud to have strong partnerships within all these communities.

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## **The Meridian Trust SENDCO Network**

The Meridian Trust SENDCO Network meetings are held six times per year to provide all SENDCOs in the trust with:

**Opportunities to share good SEND practice**

* Meridian Trust has a wide range of different Primary, Secondary and Special schools with knowledgeable and experienced SENDCOs. It is crucial that SENDCOs have opportunities to learn from and share with each other.
* A recent example: *SENDCOs from Primary, Secondary and Special schools were invited to share systems and documents that they utilise as part of the assess, plan, do, review (APDR) cycle.*

**SENDCO specific training**

* Informed by SENDCO survey responses.
* A recent example: *Developing Good Autism Practice.*

**Trust-wide SEND training**

* Informed by SEND Quality Assurance process.
* A recent example: *All Meridian Trust SENDCOs were provided with resources and guidance to enable them to deliver a setting-specific training session about APDR.*

**Coproduction of Meridian Trust SEND documents**

* The SENDCO Network meetings provide an ideal forum for creating and updating key documents.
* Recent examples: *Our SENDCO Network updated the Meridian SEND Policy and contributed to the Meridian Ordinarily Available Provision document.*

**Feedback from SENDCOs:**

**“***thanks for such a positive meeting today. It was so nice to do introductions and there was a great team vibe!!”*

*“thank you to you all for the SENCO meeting on Tuesday, it was a delight to have a meeting lead by such a knowledgeable and engaging team.....I found it informative and thought provoking....”*

A classroom with a yellow board and blue walls

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# **Meet the Team**

A person smiling for the camera

Description automatically generatedMary joined Meridian Trust in September 2017 following her role as an HMI and one of Ofsted’s National Leads for SEND. During her time with Ofsted, she introduced the Local Area SEND inspections. Mary has substantial leadership and management experience in all-through special schools and mainstream secondary schools. As well as being an Advanced Skills Teacher, Mary has held senior leadership and consultancy posts in schools in the East of England.

A person in a white shirt

Description automatically generated Amy joined Meridian Trust in September 2021 and has worked in SEND education for 20 years. She started her career at Friars School in Wellingborough where she discovered a passion for working with children and young people on the autism spectrum. She has also worked as a peripatetic autism teacher, specialist SEND teacher and autism advisory teacher in Peterborough. Amy is a qualified SENDCO and recently completed an MEd (with distinction) in Special Education: Autism (Children) at the University of Birmingham. Amy is a licensed AET trainer for 5 localities.

A person wearing glasses and a scarf

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Becky Dear has been a primary SENCo for about 18 years and currently works as Assistant Head Inclusion at Sawtry Junior Academy, with a part-time role in the Meridian Trust core SEND Team. Becky enjoys developing new SENCos in other Meridian schools, enabling them to enhance the SEND support within their own school. Becky has two boys who have Special Educational Needs; both with EHCPs. This has given her greater insight into how supporting the whole family is central to helping children progress and enjoy school.

****Victoria is the Trust’s SEND and Vulnerable Children Co-ordinator.  She has held a number of leadership positions in primary schools and has recently achieved her NPQH. Taking on the role of deputy head during the pandemic, she developed a passion for supporting children with SEMH needs. She has worked with virtual schools and local authorities to develop bespoke provision to meet those needs within a mainstream setting.

A person smiling at camera

Description automatically generated Kathy Bacon has 30 years experience in mainstream schools and two years in our area special school Martin Bacon Academy. As an Assistant Head in both settings, Kathy has a wealth of leadership experience in SEND and Primary leadership. Kathy is a qualified SENDCO and holds a range of accreditations including Webster Stratton, TEACCH and Elklan Level 3.

**Trust Vision, Mission and Values**

**Our values and who we are:**

Meridian Trust is a successful multi-academy trust founded on its commitment to people and communities.

Our proven approach over more than a decade has elevated us to a respected and admired academy trust, a national leader in education and a source of great pride to the communities we serve.

Every child is known, equally valued and supported to achieve their potential in all our academies. Every community we serve benefits from the facilities and services we provide.

Our staff benefit from strong networks, excellent career opportunities and a human approach where they are equally valued and supported.

We ensure that well-run schools retain and develop their distinct contextual identity, while sharing and contributing to Meridian Trust values, practices, curriculum approaches and operational systems.

**Our Vision:**

High-quality educational provision for all at the heart of local communities.

**Our Mission:**

To deliver, promote and inspire high quality educational provision in schools at the heart of their local communities so that:

* Young people become successful learners and confident, empowered individuals;
* Young people are encouraged to think for themselves and act for others, equipping them with the values, attributes, knowledge and skills to make a rewarding contribution to society;
* Every school is a hub for community activities, a centre for extended services and a source of immense pride for students, their families, and other local stakeholders;
* Our staff benefit from strong networks, excellent career opportunities and a human approach where they are equally valued and supported;
* Well-run schools retain and develop their distinct contextual identity while sharing and contributing to the Meridian Trust values, practices, curriculum approaches and operational systems.

**The enactment of our values for staff:**

Engaged, developed, supported, and consulted.

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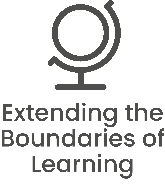
Experts who strive for continual development. Collaborative networks, trusted to deliver.



Set ambitious goals and model what success looks like. Eager to improve.



Make connections, provide opportunities. Generous and sharing of knowledge and expertise.



Are accountable for the outcomes we contribute towards and strive for the very best.



# **Why work for us**

Meridian Trust aims to be the employer of choice for the communities we serve. Since 2010 we have nurtured and developed the careers of many people. You can read about some of those journeys in the 'Meridian Trust People' section of this website. We are committed to making a difference to young people’s lives and the communities we serve. Help us make our mission a reality.

**Benefits:**

Working with us brings with it a range of attractive benefits, including;

* Generous employer contributions to Local Government or Teacher Pension Scheme
* Free on-site parking
* Eyecare vouchers
* Access to a free Employee Assistance Programme, offering mental health and wellbeing support to staff
* Cycle to work scheme
* Reduced staff membership to the facilities at Academy Leisure, Sawtry
* Free tea and coffee making facilities
* Generous sick pay and annual leave



# **How to apply**

To apply please complete the online form on the TES. Your supporting statement should address and evidence the selection criteria detailed in the Person Specification.

**Applying:**

For any questions about the application process please contact:

Meridian Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. All appointments will be subject to satisfactory pre-employment checks including enhanced DBS disclosure.

We are committed to diversity & inclusion and equality of opportunity for all staff and applications from individuals are encouraged regardless of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, race, religion or belief and marriage and civil partnerships.

Meridian Trust is committed to safer recruitment practice and pre-employment checks will be undertaken before any appointment is confirmed. This post is subject to an enhanced disclosure and barring service check. We expect all adults who work for the Trust to share our commitment to safeguarding and the health and wellbeing of our student