



**Southwark Diocesan  
Board of Education  
Multi-Academy Trust**  
Developing Church of England Education

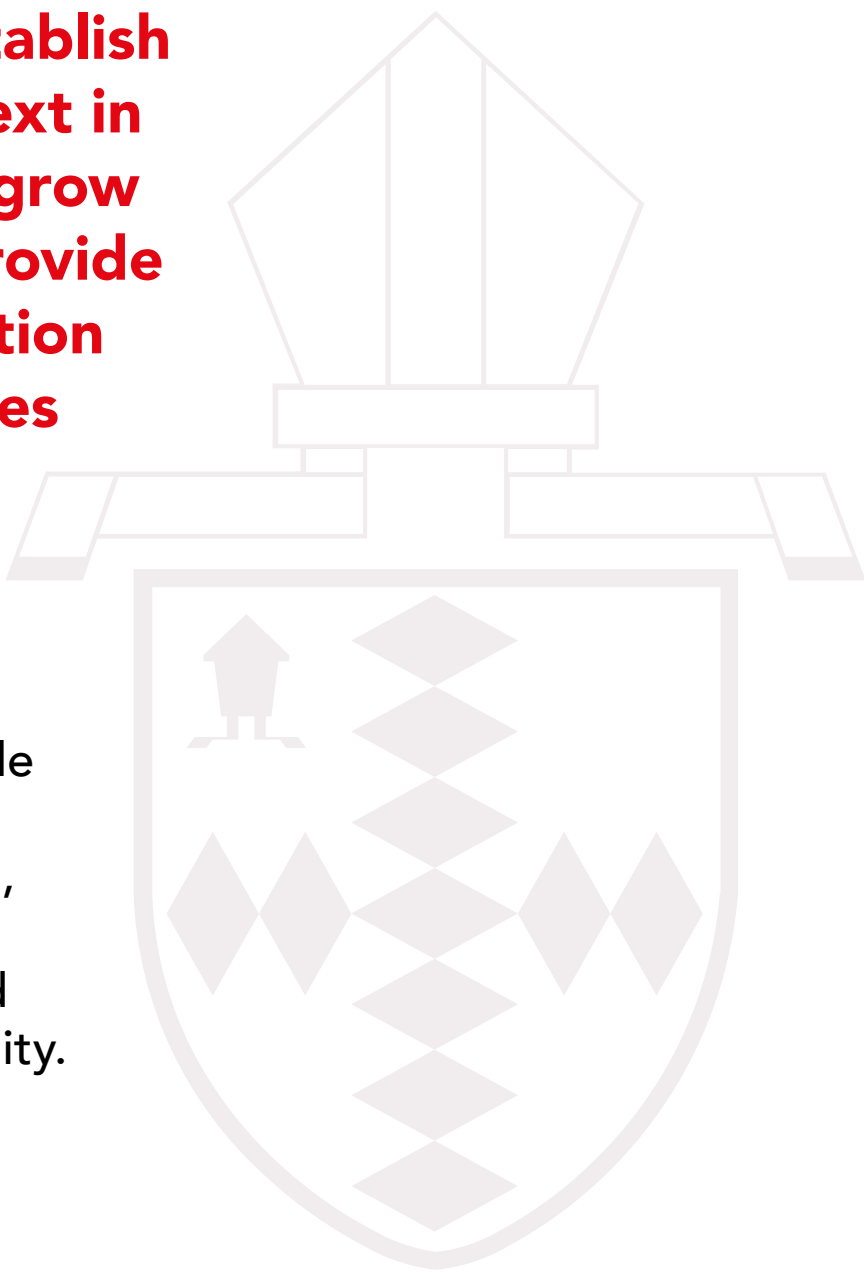
# WELCOME

2021–2022



**Our vision is to establish a culture and context in which schools can grow and flourish and provide an excellent education with Christian values at its heart.**

We will seek to enable all children and young people in our schools to realise their God-given potential, aspire to exceed their expectations and to build a Christ-centred community.



# CONTENTS

THE TRUST	EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT	BUSINESS SUPPORT
Foreword04	Overview16	Overview30
Our Structure06	The story of St Matthew's18	Finance31
Meet Our Team08	Diocesan School Improvement Partners20	Strategic Partnerships32
– The Trust Board08	Subject Leader Networks22	Funded Platforms and Software33
– Our Team10	Development Opportunities24	GDPR and Legal34
The Trust in testing times: COVID-1912	Leadership Development26	Human Resources36
Our Schools14	Safeguarding28	Capital Funding, including Health and Safety38
	Governance29	Health and Wellbeing40
		Employee Benefits42

This publication was produced in May 2021. All details were correct at the time of going to press.



# A WARM WELCOME

An introduction from three of the Trust’s leaders



**DR CATHARINA STIBE-HICKSON**  
Chair of the Trust Board



**MARCUS COOPER**  
CEO and Assistant  
Director of Education



**MARK BURNETT**  
Chief Operating Officer

From its inner-city energy to the beauty of the Surrey Hills, the Southwark Diocese is a diverse and vibrant landscape in so many wonderful ways.

We are one of the largest Dioceses in the Church of England, serving the people of South London and East Surrey. Across our Diocese there are 105 schools spread across 12 Local Authorities. Each of them is supported by the Soutwark Diocesan Board of Education, as well as their own local authority.

**OUR BEGINNING**

Most of these schools are in a very strong position, but back in 2016 we realised that the educational landscape was changing quickly, and we worried that some of our schools may become isolated. Mindful of the government’s push towards academies and how local authority support was diminishing, the Southwark Diocese created the Southwark Diocesan Board of Education Multi-Academy Trust (SDBE MAT).

We believed that by forming a Trust and offering the opportunity for our schools to join, we were creating more security for our church schools by providing stability and giving the chance for greater relations and knowledge-sharing, not just within regions, but across the Diocese, ultimately improving the educational experience for our children.

**TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER**

We recognise that each school is unique and celebrate their distinctiveness by protecting their autonomy and identity. It really is what makes our Trust so special. This way we ensure our schools continue to serve their communities and our children in a way that’s right for them.

Since day one we have seen success. Our educational and financial performance is strong, and we are growing at a steady and measured pace. We are proud to have incredible schools with incredible leaders, and we all walk together in the pursuit of excellence.

**We hope you enjoy hearing about us, meeting our team and discovering some of the key ingredients behind our successes.**



“We recognise that each school is unique and celebrate their distinctiveness by protecting their autonomy and identity, it really is what makes our Trust so special.”





# OUR STRUCTURE

WE ARE ALWAYS  
GROWING, CHANGING  
AND STRENGTHENING  
OVER TIME

### THE MEMBERS

These are our guardians. The Members protect the charitable objectives and ethos of the Trust. They take part in annual and, when needed, general meetings too. They appoint Directors to the Trust Board.

### LOCAL GOVERNING BODIES

The Local Governing Bodies (LGB) are the key strategic decision makers and vision setters in each of our academies. They are part of the overall system for school accountability. The LGB play a vital role in driving performance, understanding their communities and their needs, holding leaders to account and ensuring all resources are being used wisely to give every child the best possible education.

### THE TRUST BOARD

The legal powers and responsibilities of the Trust are held with The Board, who are accountable to the Department for Education. As a group, The Board set the overall strategic direction of the Trust. They scrutinise, challenge, and support our educational and operational performance. The Board delegate certain powers and duties to our Local Governing Bodies.

■ Find out more on p8

### TRUST EXECUTIVE TEAM

This is our Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Chief Operating Officer (COO). The Chief Executive Officer delegates the day-to-day running of the Trust to the Chief Operating Officer.

■ Find out more on p10

### EDUCATION SUPPORT

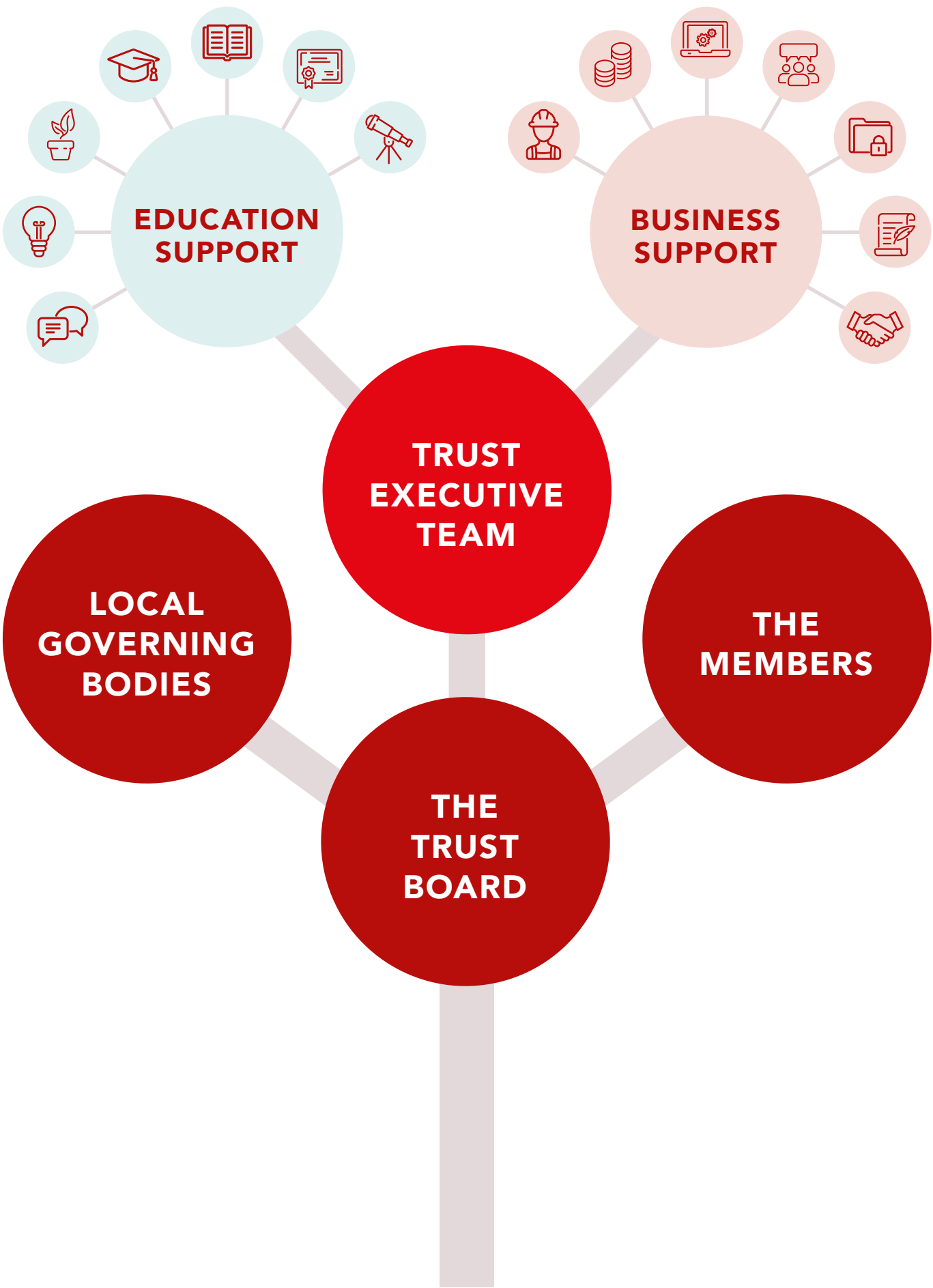
This side is led by our Education Partner. An in-depth role that needs to understand each individual school and what is needed to drive them to academic excellence. We use school improvement experts and subject consultants to help with this.

■ Find out more on p16

### BUSINESS SUPPORT

Headed up by our HR Business Partner, Finance and Operations Business Partner and Head of Finance, this team supports our schools with all their business functions, including: Finance, Human Resources, Health and Safety, Estates, Legal, Strategic Partnerships and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

■ Find out more on p30



# OUR MEMBERS AND TRUST BOARD

We are very lucky to have such a diverse group of directors who make up the Trust Board. From doctors, barristers, headteachers, financiers and clergy, we have a strong board who are able to support and challenge the Trust's leaders and ensure we continue to flourish.



**BISHOP JONATHAN CLARK**  
Chair of the Diocesan Board of Education

“The MAT offers the highest quality of education, rooted in Christian values, to schools across our diverse Diocese. It demonstrates the Anglican understanding of the mission of God to mean service to all in our communities, of every faith and none. In so doing it seeks to enable students to realise their full God-given potential and serves and strengthens our local communities. It has been a privilege as Chair of the Board of Education to see the MAT develop thus far, and I look forward to seeing it go from strength to strength in the future.”



**MARCUS COOPER**  
CEO and Assistant Director of Education

Marcus has a wide range of educational leadership experience at school, local authority and national level. During his career Marcus has taught in a range of schools and settings across the entire early years and primary age range holding various senior leadership positions. Following this Marcus was a consultant for the National Strategies, specialising in primary mathematics and school improvement. Subsequently he became Regional Advisor for School Improvement for London where he developed national guidance in relation to school improvement and assessment.

Marcus has wide experience in school improvement and for two years was the Primary and Early Years Education Officer for the States of Guernsey. More recently, Marcus was the Senior Education Manager for Hertfordshire overseeing school standards and the effective delivery of education across the authority.

In addition to being the CEO of the SDBE MAT Marcus is also the Assistant Director of Education at the Southwark Diocesan Board of Education where he promotes the Christian distinctiveness of our schools. In this role Marcus supports schools to ensure their quality of education is as strong as it can be, where all can flourish. Marcus is a Freeman of the City of London and a Fellow of the Chartered College of Teaching.

“We need to travel together so that the Christian distinctiveness and ethos that underpins both organisations – The Southwark Diocesan Board of Education and the Trust – stays together. We don't want to deviate from that, because that's a real strength.”



**DR CATHARINA STIBE-HICKSON**  
Chair of the Trust Board

Catharina has been a school governor and volunteer for 25 years. Her experience is predominantly in voluntary aided primary education with a period in maintained secondary education. A founding member and integral part of the Trust since its inception, we asked:

## How does the Trust know where to draw the line between schools' autonomy and consistency?

“When we set up the Trust, one of our main aims was to keep each of our schools' individuality. We have a clear scheme of delegation, so everyone knows who is responsible and leading on each area. The Southwark Diocesan Board of Education had 105 schools at that time and these covered a very big area from the Thames, through south London down into Surrey. Some in the vibrant, diverse inner-city, and others leafy green villages. We felt that a strength of a school is for it to be sensitive to its community and to be able to celebrate all the wonderful things that are part of its richness. Make all schools sing from exactly the same song sheet, and you risk losing that brilliance.

But, at the same time, as a multi-academy trust we have serious responsibilities, hopes and aspirations. We want to get the best outcomes for pupils, look after their safety and wellbeing, and guard the financial security of the school. We do this by collecting a whole lot of data and external expert opinions. The schools have been

very happy with that because we do it in a constructive rather than critical manner. For instance, if we see a group isn't flying as strongly as others, the question we ask isn't, 'Terrible school, why aren't you doing better?' the question is, 'Have you noticed this? What are the reasons for this?' and, 'What can we do to support you to help those children flourish?'. And when people experience that, then they are happy to share and contribute as much as possible because it is about finding out what the next steps are for making sure each child is getting the best education. Enabling all our pupils to thrive academically, mentally and spiritually to enjoy all sorts of learning is what our leaders (at all levels) do best.

We've also made some systems the same in each school to make life easier. So, for example, everyone uses the same accounting system. Because if everyone is producing the numbers in the same way, there is consistency and efficiency, it also gives us total transparency too.

We believe that for pupils and families to flourish, our staff also need to flourish with the relevant CPD, development opportunities and mutual support networks. We use a lot of inter-school's collaboration to develop leaders in aspects such as subject areas, finance, and senior leadership. These then help to share ideas and good practice to everyone's mutual benefit and efficiency. Inspired teachers set light to pupil imagination and engagement.

When we have schools that are weaker in certain aspects, they become less autonomous in those areas. The Trust's officers will then become more involved in helping them to achieve the highest standards. And once they are on the right path and have reached those goals, we take a step back again and let the school continue with its successful journey forward. It's a model that has worked really well for everyone.”



# MEET OUR TEAM

**We are a trust where you'll soon learn our names – and we'll learn yours too. We're proud of our people and have worked hard to find the right team to support our schools**



**MARK BURNETT**  
Chief Operating Officer

From educational standards to financial performance and compliance, Mark is responsible for all aspects of the Trust's day-to-day running. Previously he was the Chief Operating Officer for one of the largest and most successful Multi-Academy Trusts (MAT) in England, which he helped grow from one school to over 40. Mark took up post here at the SDBE Multi-Academy Trust in 2017 where his job was to set up the Trust from scratch and ensure it was ready to welcome and support schools on their unique journey.

Mark is a Fellow of the Chartered Management Institute, Institute of Leadership and Management, and the Institute of School Business Leadership.

**“**I am very lucky to work with such an incredible team of people within the Trust and across our schools, all of whom want to see the Trust go from strength to strength and play an active role in making that happen.”



**THOMAS SCRACE**  
HR Business Partner

An experienced HR professional with 20 years' experience. Tom supports our schools with all their people needs, challenges and opportunities. From recruitment to discipline, he guides schools through the processes, drafts documents, letters, business cases, attends meetings and throughout all – coaches the managers so they feel empowered to lead on such processes in the future.

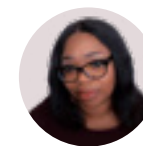
**“**I really like how the Trust works in partnership with one another. We help our individual schools have their own distinctive identities, we're not a cookie cutter academy trust. It's a special place because we work in collaboration with each other.”



**LUIGI LECCACORVI**  
Education Partner

A former Headteacher who has worked within the diocese for over 19 years, Luigi's job is to lead on educational strategies across the MAT so that they add value to each of our schools. Whilst in headship, Luigi also completed school improvement and advisory work in Islington and Merton as well as being an NQT coach for Greenwich University. He works with leaders of all types, from newly qualified teachers, subject specialists through to headteachers. Luigi has been responsible for developing the educational networks, joint CPD and new educational initiatives within our Trust.

**“**The thing that really attracted me to this role was the concept of developing collaboration across a number of schools. Teaching and learning has always been my passion. And I felt that in this role I'd be able to use all my skillsets and experience across different settings to strategically play a role in improving outcomes for pupils across our Trust.”



**FELICIA FASOKUN**  
Head of Finance

An accountant with over ten years' experience and exceptional analytical skills, we were delighted to welcome Felicia to the team in January 2021. She's responsible for managing the collective finances of all schools and reporting back to our regulatory bodies. Felicia oversees audits across the trust and helps us keep a higher-level view of schools' finances.

**“**I really like the challenges, the opportunities and the creativity that my role brings. I'm passionate about education, so it's a privilege for me to be able to use my skills and experience in this learning environment.”



**SHARJEEL ABDULLAH**  
Finance Assistant

Sharjeel's role is to support Felicia with the day-to-day financial processing that happens across the trust. We have an annual turnover of just under £20m. Sharjeel also manages the finances around building projects that we commission and ensures we do not overspend.

**“**I think being a small team at the MAT brings the best out of all of us. If there is an issue and we have to resolve it, we will all go out of our way to get the job done.”



**JO CHAPMAN**  
Finance and Operations Business Partner

New to the team, Jo is a Chartered Accountant who brings a wealth of experience in both the commercial and education sector. She supports schools to set balanced budgets, find savings, complete monthly financial processes and manage operational needs. Jo's role is to ensure schools live within their means and can continue to afford what they want to do.

**“**I enjoy working collaboratively with the schools to resolve any issues that they may be experiencing. The Trust environment enables me to take a solutions' based approach to problem solving and I get a sense of achievement when schools have those 'light bulb' moments when issues are finally resolved.”



**HELEN JONES**  
Safeguarding Partner

Helen is accredited as a Fellow of the Chartered College of Teaching and an assessor for the NPQ suite of qualifications. She has extensive experience ranging from being a headteacher to working for a local authority and subsequently as a director of a large school improvement company. She is a very experienced independent school improvement adviser, supporting and advising a diverse range of schools and academies. She is an experienced school governor, including serving as a chair of governors in a special school and is currently a Trust Board member for a MAT. Helen's particular areas of expertise includes management of safeguarding and provision for vulnerable pupils.

**“**I enjoy working with a group of colleagues who are highly committed to keeping children in the MAT schools safe. Each school has its own personality but all are driven by the need to keep children, families and staff safe. They are all thoroughly good people to work with. They willingly accept any advice I offer them and are keen to discuss how best to make things work in their own setting. I couldn't really ask for more than this!”



**CAROLE CONNELLY**  
Governance Partner

Carole has been a Chair of Governors in every school setting, from primary to secondary, during her career as a school improvement professional. She currently holds this role at a primary C of E school in Hemel Hempstead. She has worked with the Hertfordshire County Council as a senior governance advisor and written, delivered and evaluated governor training and overseen a governance helpline. Carole also has over twenty years' experience as a school improvement consultant. She worked within the Hertfordshire Local Authority before branching out as an independent consultant and trainer.



**JON ROBINSON**  
Health and Safety Partner

Jon has over 18 years' experience in health and safety and has been a Chartered Health and Safety Practitioner for 11 years. A large part of his career has involved providing advice to schools, but Jon has also worked in many different areas including depots, sports centres, and care homes.

**“**The last 12 months has really highlighted the importance of managing health and safety effectively in schools. Many will have recognised that health and safety, especially risk assessments, can play a useful part in the smooth running of the school, but others will have felt they are still an onerous burden. The challenge will be to build on the positive elements that many schools have now realised, whilst ensuring the approach remains pragmatic and sensible to avoid it becoming just another paperwork exercise.”



# THE TRUST IN TESTING TIMES



**MARK BURNETT, COO of the Trust, reflects on the Coronavirus pandemic and what it could mean for the future of education.**

“

As I look across the Trust and our schools, I feel immensely proud of not only the experience and talent that exists, but also the boundless stock of goodwill, resilience, kindness and perseverance that has carried us over this last year. And it is safe to say that this year has been a year like no other.

The Coronavirus pandemic has been a challenge for everyone and every organisation, forcing us to quickly change and rethink the way we

work. The crisis has forced us to see how we can better understand and support our children and colleagues. Changes which in many ways needed to happen and should continue. It has also reminded us how much we all rely on the work of others.

We know that our schools provide a vital service. They are the hub within a community and support families from all backgrounds. Some children have thrived from learning in new ways, trying new things and enjoying the independence. Others have not. Some have struggled to manage without routine, interaction, and the love, care and support our schools instinctively show them.

A reminder to us that our jobs mean much more than just giving children an education, it's also about providing them with a sense of purpose and belonging.

Our schools have been nothing short of amazing. Staying open during school holidays, providing food parcels for disadvantaged families, sourcing devices for children to access their education at home and developing first class digital learning content – each of our schools have responded to the bespoke needs of their children and communities.

We have incredible leaders in our schools – they knew what they needed to do to best serve their community, their children and their staff, and our role was to be there to support them in whatever way we could to make that happen.

As a Trust, our strategy during the initial phases of the pandemic was to meet regularly with our school leaders, understand the challenges they were each facing, find commonality in their concerns, and then bring the full resources of the Trust to offer sustainable solutions. This took various forms, and evolved from quite simple logistical requests, through to more complicated and carefully considered plans. Essentially, our support was designed to ensure school leaders could focus on the most pressing things, whilst we worked in the background to take as much as we could off their hands.

## Thinking about the future

As we start to think about life post-Covid, we need, as a sector, to consider what we have learned and how the future of education, its content, its delivery, could and maybe should, be different. It's too early to plot and plan a revolution, but it is certainly time to think in a measured way about our evolution.

## OUR SCHOOLS SAY:

“

**The Trust has supported us brilliantly: practically, professionally, personally and pastorally.”**

“

**HR have been a huge strength. I've had a few staff who have been anxious and stressed with the situation and the Trust support has been absolutely fantastic, very practical and timely. I'm not waiting for advice, it's there in half an hour.”**

As a Trust, we need to remain agile, measured and collegiate, continually recognising that we are more than just the sum of our parts. We need to be able to respond to changing landscapes and circumstances, whether this be educational, financial, political or other, and we need to respond as a family of schools.

Whilst all our schools are unapologetically unique, we all share a sense of collective purpose by being in our Multi-Academy Trust. There will always be a school that is vulnerable, there will always be a school that is at its best – our job as we move forward, is to ensure we keep that balance and share the best practice within our schools so that the weak may challenge the strong and the strong may support the weak, regardless of what is going on around us. We have seen this at play during the pandemic with our leaders, teachers and support staff supporting one another and it has made us collectively stronger.

I am confident that, as a family of schools, we will take forward all that we have learnt over this last year to create a richer, more efficient, more balanced, joined-up way of working to better support every single one of our pupils.

## LEADING THE WAY WITH REMOTE LEARNING

The remote learning strategy that we developed during the pandemic was a huge success. It has a sustainable legacy that we'll continue with despite returning to the classroom.

### Our four key aims:

- Equal access for everyone
- Remote CPD and networking support for teachers
- Giving pupils and teachers the highest quality of remote learning
- A remote learning legacy that would go beyond the pandemic



**We now have a Remote Learning Focus Group that is always shaping our way forward as we look to 2022.**

## WE HAVE HELPED OUR SCHOOLS BY:

- Commissioning thousands of pounds of signage for our schools
- Sourcing personal protective equipment
- Commissioning external risk assessments by public health experts
- Managing all Union liaison
- Arranging shipping containers for any school that needed to unlock classroom space by storing furniture
- Managing the day-to-day Department for Education submissions
- Ordering a Trust-wide subscription for the online meeting software, Zoom
- Securing over 800 devices for our children, including broadband, at no cost to our schools
- Partnering with two lead schools in the country able to support us with the rollout and use of Google and Microsoft educational platforms
- Emailing all schools on a daily basis with an easy to digest summary of all that has been published overnight by the Department for Education so that our leaders were always up to date

**800+** devices were secured for our children (including broadband) at no cost to our schools

# OUR SCHOOLS

**TOGETHER WE  
ARE STRONGER**

**10**  
academies within  
our Trust

**2651**  
children currently  
being taught

Over  
**450**  
staff employed  
across our family



## LAMBETH

### ST LEONARD'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY STREATHAM

Founded in 1813, St Leonard's is one of the oldest Church of England schools in the country. Offering a broad and varied curriculum with expressive arts at its core, this learning environment is a haven within a very busy urban setting.

### ST LUKE'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY WEST NORWOOD

A fantastic one-form entry primary school serving a diverse community. Situated in inner London, St Luke's is blessed with extensive grounds for outdoor learning and recreation.

### CHRIST CHURCH CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY STREATHAM

A unique school with a church on site, this one-form entry primary school serves a diverse urban community. Christ Church boasts a strong staffing team and a great outdoor space.

### ARCHBISHOP TENISON'S SECONDARY SCHOOL OVAL

A small and welcoming secondary school with a friendly environment, Archbishop Tenison's has a long proud history of developing its pupils towards future success.

## SURREY

### ST MATTHEW'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY REDHILL

A wonderful school with a diverse community feel, founded by its Christian ethos. Every child is celebrated for their unique abilities and staff always go the extra mile to help all pupils flourish.

### ST STEPHEN'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SOUTH GODSTONE

An inclusive space with a positive and calm atmosphere. This lovely school has excellent facilities including a resource base for children with vision impairment, plus: an enclosed swimming pool, a sensory room, and a forest school.

## SOUTHWARK

### ST PAUL'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY WALWORTH

St Paul's offers a rich and vibrant environment for pupils to live and learn. A welcoming school with religious diversity and a multi-cultural community that it embraces and celebrates.

## BEXLEY

### ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY EAST WICKHAM

A friendly, happy school where everyone is valued and part of a safe, nurturing Christian family. St Michael's inspires a love of learning and encourage every child to use their God given talents.

## LEWISHAM

### ST GEORGE'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY FOREST HILL

St George's has a wonderful, newly built learning environment, which is spacious and inviting. A safe and happy school which offers a stimulating education and a strong Christian ethos.

## SUTTON

### ALL SAINTS CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY CARSHALTON

All Saints provides a high standard of education within a Christian community where every person is valued as an individual. The school's vision encourages its pupils to flourish: *For each one of us to shine as a light believing we can make a difference in the world Matthew 5:16*



# EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT

**ENSURING ALL OUR  
CHILDREN REALISE THEIR  
GOD-GIVEN POTENTIAL**



Although our schools are very different in terms of their identities and communities, the aspirations and ambitions that unite this network all have the same common goal – to give children access to high-quality education and a broader-balanced curriculum.

Our educational support and school improvement strategy has been shaped through the concept of collaboration, so the skills and talents that exist and develop within the Trust, can be a benefit to all. With our Christian values at the heart of all that we do.

We work together through three main steps...

## 1 Taking time to understand each school

We find out what each school wants to achieve. We celebrate their strengths and give advice on what they could do differently and challenge them to make sure they are on the right path for excellence. Our Education Partner's job is to understand what will work best for everyone, while identifying what needs are unique to each school. This has been shaped strategically to build on the work of our schools prior to them joining us, so that they can continue to develop and flourish. We believe that our offer provides a balance of autonomy, matched with an expectation of engagement and collaboration at all levels.



## 2 Providing the right support

There are many different forms of support, from Continuing Professional Development (CPD) training to regular subject specific networking. Our schools all work together to share skills, resources and help each other in all areas. These could be anything from having a teacher with strengths in science help at another Trust school that is struggling, to running a new art workshop with our amazing Art Partner. It's about finding the commonality, coaching people and sharing best practice. We never want to take away from identity, but we do always want to encourage collaboration.



## 3 Monitoring, testing and challenging

Our schools have regular educational health checks as part of our Diocesan School Improvement Programme (DSIP). Our DSIP partners, who are Ofsted trained consultants, do deep dives on all areas of school life through a programme of structured support and challenge. While this school improvement offer has structured elements, each part of this is matched to the position of the school's own improvement journey. The Trust can also commission bespoke reviews of our schools when there is a need. This could be in preparation for inspection, or to evaluate a specific area of the school.







# COLLABORATION IS THE KEY

'Our journey as a MAT school', as told by headteacher of St Matthew's School, **JANET LIGHTFOOT**

From day one of joining the MAT, there has been strong and effective support and challenge. It's not just a box ticking exercise, it's about the children and ensuring they get excellent teaching and a broad curriculum, so that they can thrive now and in their adult life.

The support from the MAT is joined up: it's timely and responsive, it's not just knee jerk, we get consistent messages. There's really good communication. Also, the consultants and the advisors that

are used by the MAT are excellent. They've got people who know their stuff, are up to date and they are realistic. Another phrase we use: 'they just get it'. They understand the culture of what we're about.

Before we were in the MAT, the quality from the school improvement support we got from the local authority was mixed, whereas with the MAT it is consistently good. And because of the relationships we have with them, if we felt that something wasn't what we wanted,

I know – and we haven't had to do that yet – but I know we could have those honest conversations.

We have regular half-term action group meetings to review our school data, school improvement plan, self-evaluation form and headteacher reports. Plus, presentations from other subject leader reports and pupil voice too. And when Mark and Luigi get those opportunities to talk to the children about their view of our school, it gives them that 360 view of what's happening.



They really know our school community and context and are invested in everything that we do. And that then helps us to work together to identify a plan, target support and plan further professional development. A great example of this is within our EYFS where significant progress has been made over the past two years.

Each half-term we've had a visit from a DSIP – Diocese School Improvement Partner – and she's provided reports that detail our strengths and next steps as a school. There's a clear planned annual programme of visits so you know what's happening. We have a roadmap, we know where we're going. They've provided us with really good people to support the school. We've had bespoke work with the excellent consultants working with our own school's subject leaders. It's about sharing that information and building up our own leaders. So, a school isn't dependent on external people coming in and helping. It's that working together so that the subject leader can take the knowledge and run with it themselves.

We had a SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) inspection on the 17 March last year, just before schools closed for lockdown. We did brilliantly, we got 'excellent' in every single category. That sets us up nicely now for our next Ofsted inspection. We just want them to come in and see the great things that we do here."

**Education Partner Luigi Leccacorvi says, "Janet Lightfoot and her Senior Leadership Team, have really stepped up to the challenge and driven the pace of change. The progress that St Matthew's has made is very significant. We have a shared vision and our aim will always be to ensure that improvement strategies are sustainable for the school."**

MEET  
**LUIGI LECCACORVI**  
our Education  
Partner



“

**What happens when a new school joins?**

"Regardless of the school's strengths, development points or most recent Ofsted outcome, they can add value to the Trust, and we can add value to them. We would initially do work around what the expectations are, from both parties – school and the Trust. There will be a 360-education health check and a conversation establishing what the school needs and how appropriate our current CPD and training packages are. Each of our schools will also benefit from the DSIP, school improvement partner programme. In its simplest sense, the relationship will begin with an honest and frank dialogue around where we are, where the school is. We develop our support and challenge from this starting point. It's about developing a school improvement strategy in a way that is collaborative, but also with clear expectations."

**How do you support and challenge schools?**

We will find a strategy focusing on what the school needs. And then we match that with the right resources and expertise, then add challenge to make it happen. We have action groups half-termly at some of our schools, to make sure these improvements are happening at the right pace and measure the impact of any change. It's a highly structured programme of support and challenge where we at first have to be more directive than say with a school that is further along their school improvement journey.





# DIOCESAN SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PARTNERS

**We give our schools the right resources so they can always be their best. But one thing that really sets us apart is our Diocesan School Improvement Partnership (DSIP) programme.**

Each academy is assigned a school improvement expert with road-mapped visits over the year. It's an amazing partnership that both pushes, praises, evaluates and educates on a journey to excellence. We align this with any other development initiatives that are taking place at the school through the Education Partner. This allows for a truly joined-up approach to school improvement. When needed, the Trust will direct additional DSIP days to the school to provide additional support and challenge, specific to that setting.



Meet one of our Diocesan School Improvement Partners **ISABEL RAMSAY**

Isabel was the Executive Head Teacher of Bandon Hill Primary, until August 2017, when she retired. Under her leadership Bandon Hill maintained "Outstanding" for the past 18 years. In 2010 she was awarded National Leader in Education status.

**What do you enjoy most about working with our schools?**

“

Seeing all my schools thrive, grow and flourish. It's a privilege to see that they are making such a difference to children's learnings. And then seeing the teachers and senior leadership become so much more confident. It really is fantastic.”



## THE SEVEN DSIP VISITS

Our DSIPs are specially chosen for their extensive experience and ability to balance challenge with support. Isabel Ramsay – DSIP to St Stephen's, St Matthew's and St Michael's – explains more about how these seven visits work below.

### AUTUMN TERM

#### VISIT 1

Our first day has a focus on leadership and management across the school. The Senior Leaders and I look at key priorities for the coming year, we all undertake a learning and teaching walk around the whole school. We talk to children and ask about their learning. A safeguarding check is undertaken.



#### VISIT 2

Here we concentrate more on the specific learning and teaching across the school. We take a more detailed learning walk with a specific focus on an agreed area e.g. maths or SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) pupils and how they are learning. We look at how teacher planning and pupil attainment is being monitored.

Key pupil groups of children are identified and we perform an analysis of how these groups are performing and here we offer some challenge. For example, how boys perform in maths compared to girls. We want to make sure that all children are performing to the best of their abilities.

#### VISIT 3

We look at Headteacher Performance Management. Prior to this meeting, the Headteacher submits evidence against the objectives set last year. This is presented to Governors in advance so they can see clearly if the Head has met their objectives. We then set new SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely) objectives for the upcoming year.

I realise that Headship can be a lonely role with no-one at your level and I let Headteachers know they can always reach out to me outside my seven set DSIP visits if they need to talk through any concerns.



### SPRING TERM

#### VISIT 4

We focus on personal development, behaviour, well-being and safeguarding. We visit the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) looking at Reception and Nursery classes. We also meet with Middle Leaders to understand the impact they are having on pupils' learning and on whole school improvement.

I recognise that this can be seen as a challenge for Middle Leaders, but my role is to increase their professional development and to empower them to talk with confidence, knowledge and passion about their subject areas.



#### VISIT 5

Here we return to Leadership and Management. Each school writes a School Self Evaluation Form (SEF), which is sent to Ofsted prior to an inspection. We critique this and ensure that it is unique and really reflects the work of that particular school.

We challenge Headteachers about the statements in the SEF, for example, "How do you know this?" or, "What impact does this initiative have on children's learning?"

### SUMMER TERM



#### VISIT 6

We return to teaching, learning and assessments. Due to the pandemic and schools being partially open, this year we discussed the provision for remote home learning. A detailed book scrutiny in literacy, maths and foundation subjects is undertaken and this can be with Senior Leaders and Middle Leaders. The parents survey is discussed and analysed. Staffing plans for the following September are reviewed.

#### VISIT 7

The last visit of the year concentrates on the priorities and plans for the coming autumn term, whilst reviewing the overall effectiveness of the whole school over the past year. We review any assessment results and monitor the progress of year groups to ensure that all children are on track to achieve age-related expectations. I may also meet with the Chair of Governors, to look at the effectiveness of the school's governance.





# SUBJECT LEADER NETWORKS

## What are these?

This really is where the magic happens in our Trust. We currently have nine Subject Leader Networks, and these are still growing. For each, our schools select a teacher with the relevant interest and skill set to become their Subject Leader.

Each of these networks then has a professional expert assigned to them who will always be on hand to help. They'll attend regular training sessions together, and then each leader brings back their developed skills into school so that other colleagues, and ultimately pupils, can benefit. It's not only a great way of training, but also brilliant in building relationships and getting teachers from across all schools in the Trust sharing ideas with each other.

At the beginning of each academic year, each Subject Leader identifies subject priorities for their school and shares these at the network. This allows us to develop a set of strategic Trust priorities that are similar across the schools and forms the shape of the input from these networks across the year.

Through our Subject Networks, we have created links with Department of Education (DfE) accredited hubs. This has given us access to the latest subject specific research, initiatives and funding streams. Currently we link with our local maths, English and computing hubs as well as with STEM science and Heritage England.

## OUR CURRENT NETWORKS

- ▶ PSHE
- ▶ English
- ▶ Maths
- ▶ Science
- ▶ Computing
- ▶ Modern Foreign Languages
- ▶ Humanities
- ▶ Early years
- ▶ SENCO

## OUR LEADERS SAY:

“

Another difference about being in the MAT is that it has developed leadership at all levels, particularly at all subjects. With the demise of funds from the local authorities, that's something that has really lacked previously. So, our computing lead, our art lead have all received training in line with the core subjects – Maths, English and RE – and it's given them a more in-depth subject knowledge and a range of leadership skills to improve outcomes within the schools.”

### NICKY ZERONIAN-DALLEY

Executive Headteacher,  
St Luke's and Christ Church Primary Schools



## CELEBRATING ALL SUBJECTS

One of the things we have worked hard to do is to develop the CPD Subject Leader Networks. We know that many of the foundation Subject Leaders may not have been part of a meaningful network for a number of years, and we want to develop subject specific collaboration.

Our aim is that all the Subject Leaders can network purposefully in order to develop and enhance the quality of teaching and learning within their subject. And every subject is recognised as being important. It's about building and embedding those frameworks so that over time they are self-sustainable.

When operationally they are strong, we want our excellent Subject Leaders to take a more strategic leadership role, so that they continue to influence collaboration.

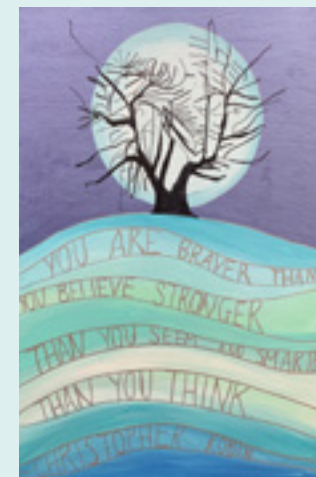
## MEET GABRIELLA HEANEY The Art Leader at St Leonard's

“

I've always had an interest in art. I'd been to art school before I took my undergraduate degree, and at one point it might have featured more in my career, but I decided that long term I wanted to focus on teaching, but my interest in art had always stayed with me.

Up until I came to St Leonard's, I hadn't been given an opportunity to use those skills. Then the MAT put me in touch with an art consultant called Amy Bairstow. She is fantastic. So good at finding ways of bringing art into schools regardless how much experience there is in terms of art. She is very resourceful of ways of thinking to incorporate different art mediums depending on what type of budget you have.

We have art leader meetings once a term, all the art leaders within the MAT meet and share ideas. We focus on a skill and get time to practice that too.



The children have really benefitted from it. With the help of Amy, our art consultant, we planned an art week. Each year group created a piece of work over the course of the week and we then had an exhibition and set it out like an art gallery with each class curating their own space. It was brilliant and everyone really enjoyed it. The work they produced was absolutely fantastic.”

## MEET AMY BAIRSTOW The Trust's Art Consultant



“

It's a great programme, I'm really pleased to be onboard with it. I teach different skills to the art leaders. I tend to focus the training around specific art mediums, for example in our first training we looked at drawing skills. In each session, I like to try and get them to create an outcome. We do lots of skills like shading techniques and tones. Then we apply those to a piece of actual work.

We also look at how to develop the school's learning environment. For example, looking at displays, classrooms, book corners with art. We also have training sessions where we look at displays and plan for display ideas. Transforming the atmosphere of a school is a big part of my role as an art consultant too.”

## WE SAY:

“

**Amy is a fantastic freelance artist who works with Artworks Education. She specialises in textile designs, murals and festival installations. Her practical approach to art and how it can inspire in education have made a real difference to our schools.”**





# DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

We recognise the value in developing a broad range of educational development training for our schools. All our curriculum development offer has been planned to respond to the current training and improvement needs of our schools individually, as well as responding to key themes across the Trust.

## Special Educational Needs Training and Development

As well as our SENCO Network Meetings, our Trust have developed a brilliant partnership with **Whole School SEND**, which is a Department of Education funded framework. This has enabled each of our schools to identify staff within their school that want to be trained as a SEND Reviewer, who will then pair up with another colleague from across the Trust to offer peer-to-peer support and challenge. Whole School SEND have also facilitated Trust-wide CPD available to all our teachers that was recently attended (remotely) by over 130 delegates.

### OUR TEACHERS SAY:

“

I found the training to be extremely interesting and informative. I will be using the knowledge I gained to examine how children with SEND are supported throughout the setting and my own practice within this. I hope to develop a peer review system in which our partner schools can use the training to celebrate and support best practice.”

## End of Key Stage Moderation

Our end of key stage moderation cycle is now embedded across the Trust. At each termly session, our teachers from across our MAT schools support each other in moderating their pupils' learning. We also have the opportunity for teachers that are new to their year group to undertake moderation training so that they have the skills and expertise to make well informed teacher assessment judgements.

### OUR TEACHERS SAY:

“

Being new to the early years, I find the moderation sessions useful not just for assessment purposes, but because they give me the opportunity to talk to other early years teachers about how they run their classrooms on a day-to-day basis.”



## Early Years Foundation Stage Conference

We host an annual EYFS Conference where we bring together early years practitioners and leaders from across our schools to learn, collaborate and share expertise. The sessions have elements of keynote input, but also provide colleagues with an opportunity to engage in practical activities that can then be used within their own setting.

### OUR TEACHERS SAY:

“

All of the conference sessions were so useful. Such an empowering and worthwhile piece of CPD that I can apply within my setting. The conference provided me with a brilliant opportunity to analyse my curriculum and discuss next steps with other EYFS specialists.”

## The Reflective Teacher Programme

This training programme has been designed to support all our teachers to be able to reflect on their current teaching strategies and use the structured programme input to shape future personal developments and aims. This programme provides attendees with an opportunity to take a step back and reflect on their current teaching practice, deepen their understanding of teaching methods, and share these experiences with colleagues from other schools.

### OUR TEACHERS SAY:

“

It has been refreshing to be given the time to examine and hone your own teaching technique in a supportive environment. Reflection and continuous development are all too easily taken as a given that teachers can and have time to do this. The reflective teacher programme has improved my teaching and helped me consider other styles of practice.”

## National College Subscription

We are continually looking for opportunities to provide our schools with high quality CPD opportunities that are cost-effective and flexible. The National College provide engaging CPD in video format on the latest educational practice, policy and research, working with some of the leading experts in education. This has enabled colleagues within our school to access training during the pandemic, when other face-to-face forms of training have not been possible.

### OUR TEACHERS SAY:

“

**The MAT's commitment to National College membership for all its schools is just one sign of their investment in our professional development. The webinars were a great way to keep up with current thinking and developments, especially throughout lockdown.”**



## Other Development Opportunities available to our schools include:

- ▶ Developing Greater Depth in KS1 and KS2 Training
- ▶ The Music Leaders Conference
- ▶ Pupil Premium Leadership Development
- ▶ Developing an inclusive and diverse curriculum training and development





# LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

GROWING  
OUR FUTURE  
LEADERS

Leadership development is one of the most important and successful parts of our Trust. We take a restless approach to developing our leaders, offering them qualifications, training, and almost endless opportunities to work in other schools, settings and roles within the Trust to gain further experience.



**MARK BURNETT, COO of the Trust**

“

Across our Trust, we believe passionately in the power of Distributed Leadership.

We have an incredible workforce with a range of skills and experiences that can, if identified and nurtured, play a huge part in the Trust's development and success. A big part of where we are today is because of the leaders and staff we have in our schools also having a Trust-wide responsibility for an area of Trust life.

It means everyone has the opportunity to develop and shape our future and is, for me, what a Multi-Academy Trust is all about. It also helps set the culture of our organisation - everyone is valued, everyone plays a part, everyone can flourish. We don't hear comments like "Why isn't the Trust doing this...", instead, it's "Why aren't we doing this". That's important and key to our success.

To help recognise those who have a Trust-wide responsibility, we created Trust Development Responsibilities (TDR). A TDR may be awarded to an employee for undertaking a fixed-term initiative or project which will ultimately have a positive and significant impact across the Trust."



**The Trust is proud to be a Regional Delivery Partner for the Church of England, which means we can deliver and award National Professional Qualifications.**



We have supported two of our headteachers who are passionate about leadership development to become accredited to deliver nationally recognised qualifications. They have developed and coached countless staff across our Trust helping them to achieve their qualification and improve teaching and learning within their schools...



**MEET AMANDA BLACKBURN**  
Headteacher of St Stephen's Primary School



“

The Trust is keen to support existing expertise and interests in the MAT. I took part in the 'train the trainer' for the NPQSL (National Professional Qualification for Senior Leadership). We're now on cohort number three, qualification for Middle Leaders. The MAT funds all the training.

There are advantages to individuals and the school as a whole because of this. Individually, their leadership is enhanced, the professional developments improve, and they've got opportunities to network professionally with staff from other schools. As a school, the advantages are high too because it helps with our succession planning. It also gives potential for staff within the MAT and not just within their school. And then all the candidates do a school-based project and that enhances improvements for everyone."

**MEET SIMON JACKSON**  
Headteacher of St Leonard's Primary School



“

There are no limits on the number of candidates schools can put forward for the National Professional Qualification for Middle Leadership. Out of my 16-teaching staff, I've only got two that haven't taken this course and that's because they are new to teaching. It's a great example of how teachers are having quality training and developing their career as much as it is about how they are developing their schools.

Crucially, this is at no additional cost to the school. It means we can offer far more training to people at all levels. That makes teachers feel valued. Before we joined the MAT, if I wanted a teacher to take this course, we were looking at finding an extra £1000 every time."

**SOPHIA BRYAN-WHTYE**

Head of school at Christ Church Streatham and St Luke's C of E Primary Schools



“

I really wanted to do the NPQH in my last school, but was told there was little funding available. So when I joined the MAT I could hardly believe it when the opportunity arose. I didn't have to beg for it, in fact they contacted me and asked whether I wanted to do it. I felt proud that they'd invested in me. They look for potential in individuals and seek to develop them.

I have gained so much from the course which has made me a stronger more viable leader. I've always felt 'called' as a teacher, but now I feel so much more committed and connected because I am working with people who invest in their staff."

**KATE PENFOLD**

Deputy Head at St Matthew's C of E Primary School



“

The MAT funded my NPQH for me which was an amazing investment. It was fantastic. The C of E element of the course was important to me. It taught me about knowing your Christian vision, staying true to this and then being able to sit with the difficult decisions you have to make in leadership, because you know the reasons you've made them and you've stayed true to your vision for the school."



# SAFEGUARDING



## MAKING CHILDREN'S WELFARE OUR PRIORITY



The Trust recognises the crucial role that effective safeguarding plays and is highly committed to keeping the children, families and staff within its schools protected. Our dedicated Safeguarding Partner works alongside our schools to ensure that the culture of safeguarding is as strong as possible.

Each of our schools has an annual audit, led by our Safeguarding Partner. Safeguarding is a vast and varied area of school life and this audit provides a 'health-check' on everything from child protection and office data procedures, through to the attitudes and feedback from pupils and staff at the school. It's a real 360-degrees on every aspect. At the end of the audit, our Safeguarding

Partner shares strengths and any development points that are needed. To enable our schools to action any needed improvements, our Safeguarding Partner will provide bespoke support as appropriate so that the cycle of strengthening can continue.

In addition to the school-specific safeguarding offer, our Safeguarding Partner facilitates Trust-wide training for staff and governors around key elements, such as 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', updates MAT Safeguarding Policies and Procedures on an annual basis and is available for schools for advice and guidance as required. This expertise is invaluable to our schools.



# GOVERNANCE

## OUR GOVERNANCE SERVICES

The Trust recognises the importance of our schools' governors. We believe that to be effective, governance should be local. This ensures the knowledge and ethos of each school's community is given the importance it deserves.

We use our experienced Governance Partner to provide full support to every one of our governors. This varied service includes bespoke school-to-school governance support, governance reviews, school specific and MAT-wide training and CPD. We are committed to supporting our local government boards to be as strong as they can be.

## MEET ONE OF OUR SCHOOL GOVERNORS THE VENERABLE MOIRA ASTIN



Moira is the Archdeacon of Reigate in the Diocese of Southwark. She has been Chair of Governors for St Matthew's for almost three years and is part of our Action Group meetings that regularly challenge our schools. She has a wealth of governing experience including chair of trustees of an Anglican secondary academy and vice chair of a community infant school.

## How does the Trust live out its Christian values?



I think there are two aspects to that. There's the explicit and the implicit. I like the fact that the Trust and the school are explicitly Christian. We start meetings with prayer, we're not shy about talking about God and the difference God makes. The school environment is God positive.

And there is also the implicit, which is living by Christian values.

There is very much the sense that when you join The Trust, you don't then just become part of a corporate entity. Each of the schools keeps its identity, keep their Christian value statements and don't suddenly have to do things in a particular way because we've become part of a sausage factory!

And there's very strong emphasis, which I would say is Christian, of valuing each school as its own individual community. All the communities relate to each other and The Trust enables mutual sharing, which is wonderful. It's enabled all sorts of opportunities for our staff to get extra experience.

We're a network of schools who are all committed to children growing up knowing their biblical stories, but also experiencing what it is to be within that Christian community. Whether or not they choose to develop that further or not, that's entirely up to them, but it's to give them that experience. If we'd gone with any other MAT, we just wouldn't have had that."





# BUSINESS SUPPORT

## SUPPORTING OUR SCHOOLS' DAY-TO-DAY NEEDS



The business side of a Multi-Academy Trust is the engine that runs in the background, helping ensure all schools have great staff, high-quality resources, and conducive learning environments where our pupils can learn and flourish.

Making up 3/5 of our entire workforce, our support staff are the glue that holds all the business and operational sides of school life together so our teachers can focus on teaching and learning.

## FINANCE

**The role of finance within a Multi-Academy Trust is different from the role that was held as a Local Authority or Voluntary-Aided school.**

The SDBE MAT Finance Team understand the regulatory requirements and are there to help their Academies and offer support and training. We give guidance to schools on the suitability of their budgets and offer support on becoming more financially efficient.

We provide training for Business Managers, Headteachers and Governors on all aspects of finance. We complete all statutory returns which are required. This includes the audited financial statements, accounts' return, and the annual consolidated budget forecast returns.

**Our Finance Team will support you in assessing the financial sustainability of your workforce, considering future developments and advise on different staffing models and strategies, including sharing resources and expertise with other schools within the Trust.**



## GDPR



Schools process a lot of personal data relating to pupils and staff. They also acquire personal data from other people including: parents, carers, local governors, trustees, members of the local community, suppliers, contractors and consultants. It is very important that this personal data is handled carefully and legally. We provide all policies and processes to support them to be compliant. contract reviews through to tribunals.

## LEGAL



Our Legal Partner, **Winckworth Sherwood**, provide legal support to the Trust and our schools as required. They support us with everything from contract reviews through to tribunals.



# STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

We help schools secure financial efficiencies through collective bargaining, negotiation and procurement. We partner with specially chosen suppliers and providers to offer services at lower prices to our schools.

## WallArt

A company that specialises in creating enchanting learning environments.



## Ecclesiastical Insurance

We have partnered with them for our group insurance to help ensure we are getting the best value for money with a single, trust-wide contract.



## Arbor

A web-based management information system to help schools reduce their licensing and hardware costs and access a platform with better functionality than their previous systems.



## Cleverbox

A marketing agency who are experienced in the education sector to help produce marketing materials and websites for our schools at a hugely discounted rate.

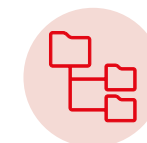


# OUR SCHOOLS USE SEVERAL COMMON SOFTWARE SYSTEMS

This makes information sharing and reporting as easy and effective as possible. All of these are funded by the Trust.

## GovernorHub

An online, document sharing and knowledgebase for all governors. Provides an easy way to share minutes, discuss topics and access key information.



## CPOMS

For the effective and efficient management of safeguarding concerns, an online platform which can record concerns, interventions and support for any child.



## Access – Finance and Budgeting

An integrated software platform which replaces Capita SIMS. These packages are the place for all our schools' financial processing and budgeting information.



## Payroll

Working with our partner, Strictly Education, we have a common payroll provider across all our schools which helps reduce costs and gives a better service.





## TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

We take a step back and look at the bigger picture, so our schools can put their full focus on teaching.



## MEET LORRAINE BERRY

our Finance Manager

Lorraine is the School Business Manager at All Saints, Carshalton. Recently she was appointed to be a Finance Manager across a number of schools in the Trust. We spoke to Lorraine about her role.



“

I have been a school business manager since 2009 in various schools and worked in education for the last 20 years and to be able to get the level of support that we have now is amazing.

The Trust has its own Finance and Operations Business Partner who supports every single school business manager. Whereas previously, in the local authority, I was sending out finance reports and they would be ticked off but that was it. You get much more in-depth feedback from the MAT, they will be a critical friend and challenge, which is a good thing. So we are still continuously developing our skills because of this.”

### What are the challenges?

“We carry out time specific month end procedures which are uploaded onto the MAT portal. These are checked and feedback given – this challenges us to think about how processes are carried out in other schools and see where we can collaborate to save costs.”

The challenges are good though. I have been challenged with opportunities too, like going to look after three schools. They are very much a ‘critical friend’ in respect of something we haven’t thought of, or we haven’t seen.”

### How has finance changed since moving away from the local authority?

“When we were with the Local Authority, we had to pay extra for all the services like finance, HR and health and safety. But with the MAT this is all included with the contribution costs. It’s great, very good value for money. I know that Mark is very keen that staff within the MAT develop rather than continuously getting outside people in. We try to develop in the team we’ve got. We look at the staff’s skills and try to develop them. There’s a big investment in people and that then improves everything.”

“

Our schools are individual, but we’ve all got the same goals: to ensure we stay financially secure and make sure our children can get the best education.”

### What makes the MAT special?

“The Trust’s School Business Manager Network is fantastic. I wouldn’t be the person I am today without them! It’s an amazing network and we all thrive off each other. We’ve all grown together and become a support group for each other. If someone needs professional advice, extra hand-holding, or even a hug, we’re always there for each other.

We trust each other implicitly and we’re very much a team. It doesn’t matter how silly I think my question is, I always feel comfortable in reaching out to one of them. We all have our own great skills. For example, one Business Manager used to be a Facilities Manager, so anything to do with premises I’ll go straight to him. And we have another one who is brilliant at bid writing for funding and grants. So, we’ve all got our individual strengths, but we are very much bought together through the MAT.

We work together knowing we are all on the same journey, we’re all on the same page. Our schools are individual, but we’ve all got the same goals: to ensure we stay financially secure and make sure our children can get the best education.”





# HUMAN RESOURCES

**We recognise that staff are a school's most important asset to drive forward exceptional educational experiences, performance and standards, and that great staff management is the key to continuous school improvement.**

The Trust works with our schools to provide support and advice which is tailored to the specific needs of every academy. From remote guidance through to hands-on support, we'll guide you on all aspects of HR, from legislation and policy compliance through to employee relation matters.



MEET  
**THOMAS  
SCRACE**  
HR Business  
Partner



Thomas is the man behind our people. From recruitment to union representation, he's your go-to for full support on all HR matters

“

Our teachers and staff call me as much as they need to, depending on what is going on. It might be that they have lots of active cases and questions. Or, they might be fine trundling along. Really, our schools get all the support they need, there's no limit, it's not like you get a certain number of hours, it's as much support as you need.

“We're very aware that someone doesn't tend to go into teaching because they want to be a manager. They go into teaching because they want to teach pupils, so once you get to a senior role, it can be a slightly different skillset that they need support with. You do not necessarily go into teaching to do HR or finance, it's really helping to give people the relevant and concise info, like explaining the background behind legal bits and pieces. I like to give someone a kind of straight up answer, 'No you can't'. And then go into detail to why that is. I'll coach and give teachers and business manager the right knowledge and skills around HR when needed.”

## OUR LEADERS SAY:

“

HR at the MAT is great. Tom Scrace is just fantastic, we can contact him at any point. He always offers that assurance we are doing the right thing... or not! His support is second to none. I have his mobile number and he's always there when needed. And if he doesn't know the answer he'll say: 'Sophia, leave it with me and I'll find out'. And he always does.

We have had to make changes in staffing structure and Tom supported with this. He did all the leg work. Whereas, in another school I was previously at – that wasn't in the MAT - that was all our responsibility and the process was absolutely overwhelming. It was such a relief having his support.”

### SOPHIA BRYAN-WHYTE

Head of school at Christ Church  
Streatham and St Luke's  
C of E Primary Schools



## HELPING YOU WITH HR



- ▶ We work in partnership with our Occupational Health and Wellbeing providers to support and address both short-term and long-term absences, including advice on reasonable adjustments and Equality Act implications.
- ▶ We will support you and your governing body with any conduct or capability issues. This includes advice around suspensions, thorough investigations and our presence and support at formal hearings and appeals. We will also provide support on negotiating settlement agreements. The Trust will provide template letters which can be used through each step of formal proceedings.
- ▶ We provide you with comprehensive information and guidance to ensure you are up to date with statutory responsibilities and relevant employment legislation. This will include regular HR bulletins and website updates which can be accessed whenever and wherever needed
- ▶ If reorganisations and/or redundancies are envisaged, we will support and provide the tools to prepare appropriate Business Cases before they are shared with your Governing Body for approval. We will attend at each stage of the formal consultation process, including meetings with Unions, staff groups and one-to-ones.
- ▶ Members of the Trust will take part and sit on interview panels for Headteacher recruitment and can also provide advice on other recruitment issues.
- ▶ The Trust gives guidance and support on advertising and recruitment. This will range from advice on drafting job descriptions and adverts, effective places to advertise and interview and assessment options. We will also advertise any positions you send us on our own website.
- ▶ Through our preferred partner, uCheck, we provide an online DBS administration service for all schools, ensuring full compliance with regulations leading to informed decisions about the suitability of individuals for particular posts.
- ▶ We will supply you with legally compliant employment contracts for all new starters, including apprentices and supply staff. We will also provide templates for contract variations and leaver confirmation letters that can be used within school.
- ▶ Our HR Team will support you in interpreting any advice or guidance issued by Occupational Health about reasonable adjustments for new starters and rehabilitation for staff returning to work following sickness absence, including advice for employees on the measures they might take to improve their health, or contact local services.



# CAPITAL FUNDING

From new building constructions to existing improvements, we are very proud of all the capital improvements we've helped push forward for our schools.

We commission an excellent firm of building surveyors that work across the Trust. They produce condition surveys of all the schools. Every year a window opens for Capital Funding at the Department for Education (DfE) and we work with them to draft bids. And we've had one of the best success rates of any trusts on getting these approved.

In total we have managed to claim around £3.5m on Capital Works, which has been used to improve everything from fire safety, to boilers, roofs and swimming pools.

We will commission a building condition survey every five years to ensure we know the areas requiring development. This five-year plan, which will be shared with the school, details the areas where capital money is required and the likely sources for that budget, whether it be through a grant or school funded. The report also enables us to submit accurate and evidence-based bids when applying for Capital Funding.

£3.5m

Total amount secured by the Trust for capital works to fund projects from fire safety to swimming pools.



“Our school has been transformed since joining the Trust. Their central team have worked tirelessly to find funding for capital projects like our new reception, which is welcoming and friendly but still maintains the charm of a historical building almost 100 years old.”

**SIMON WILSON**  
Headteacher of Archbishop  
Tenison's School



## OUR LEADERS SAY:

“We had been trying to fundraise for a while to get our outdoor swimming pool enclosed. Then, when we joined the MAT, they did a safeguarding bid for our external fencing and they incorporated aspects of the safeguarding into the pool and this was successful. That has meant we now have a covered pool that we can use all year round. Their surveyors are great, we've had success the last two years of the projects that they have applied for on our behalf.”

**AMANDA BLACKBURN**  
Headteacher at St Stephen's  
Surrey



## HEALTH AND SAFETY



- ▶ We will act as your competent health and safety advisors to assist you in meeting your obligations under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.
- ▶ You'll get advice and full guidance on all aspects including: technical aspects of risk assessments, fire safety, asbestos, electrical safety and on-site reviews of arrangements. We will also provide specialist support with health and safety curriculum issues including outdoor education advice and school visits.
- ▶ We'll conduct annual audits and health checks to identify estates issues and gaps in health and safety compliance and provision. And if ever needed, we will assist with accident or incident investigations and reporting incidents on behalf of your school.



# HEALTH AND WELLBEING



## PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH



“

Mental health is something I am passionate about and since the Trust was formed I have wanted us to play an active role in supporting those, of any age, who suffer from poor mental health.

I know from experience the impact it can have, especially on children and young adults. As a family of schools with almost 3,000 children in our Trust, we can make a positive difference.

The big trouble with youth mental health is that support used to be only available once you're in secondary school, and even then, mainly only in years 10 and 11. That's a problem because anxiety and even depression

can start in primary school, it's something not many people know.

About a year after we welcomed our first schools into the Trust, I reached out to Mental Health England to discuss this issue. I shared with them our thoughts on the need for support, materials and guidance for all ages. And they agreed.

We shared our commitment to this important challenge and became one of the first Trusts in the country to partner with them, embarking on a programme to develop our workforce so that they can raise awareness, spot children in need and then signpost them to the right help. We even became accredited

to deliver the 2-day Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) qualification and training to our staff by supporting one of our Headteachers to become an instructor.

Now, in every one of our schools we have at least two trained Youth Mental Health First Aiders. And gradually our whole workforce will be trained to help with our children's mental health.

I feel very fortunate to have such a great group of Headteachers and Senior Leaders who keep this agenda alive in our schools.”

**MARK BURNETT**  
COO of the Trust

### WHAT WE ARE DOING TO HELP

To enable us to support youth mental health on an ongoing basis we have taken these six steps:

- 1 Each school within our Trust will have a minimum of two accredited **Youth Mental Health First Aiders** who will champion our strategy within their own schools.
- 2 One of our own highly experienced Headteachers is also an accredited trained instructor in YMHFA and is responsible for training others within the Trust.
- 3 We are enhancing many of our training programmes by including an additional module on youth mental health to better equip new staff and provide them with a greater understanding of the issues and where advice and support can be found. Likewise we are also enhancing our Middle Leader NPQML programme with an additional module specifically focusing on youth mental health.
- 4 As part of the training programmes we are also developing additional resources to enable mental wellbeing to be incorporated into our teaching and everyday lessons. This will include an online knowledge base for all staff to access these resources.
- 5 All our staff are able to access emotional support through our Employee Assistance programme which offers a 24/7 counselling telephone line as well as follow up face-to-face counselling where requested.
- 6 Within each of our schools, at least one INSET day each year will have a YMHFA training component which will enable all staff to develop a better understanding of Youth Mental Health issues and how we can support our young people.



### YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AIDERS (YMHFA)

Once trained, our YMHFA's have:

- An in depth understanding of young people's mental health and factors that affect wellbeing.
- Practical skills to spot the triggers and signs of mental health issues.
- Confidence to reassure and support a young person in distress.
- Enhanced interpersonal skills such as non-judgemental listening.
- Knowledge to help a young person recover their health by guiding them to further support – whether that is through self-help sites, their place of learning, the NHS, or a mix – engaging with parents, carers and external agencies where appropriate.
- Ability to support a young person with a long-term mental health issue or disability to thrive.



# EMPLOYEE BENEFITS



We provide the support and tools to help you live a healthier and happier life, because how you feel matters to us.

## Annual Flu Vaccination Programme

Seasonal flu is a big cause of short-term illness. It's highly contagious and can affect a large number of working adults of all ages. A flu vaccination is a simple way to help keep healthy. We partner with Boots pharmacy to offer free flu vaccinations to all our staff.

## Medigold Health Newsletter

Each month we send a special newsletter covering a range of topical issues to help promote physical and mental wellbeing. From exercise to giving up smoking, counselling and meditation, it's a great hub of advice signposting staff to the best resources available to them.

## Employee Assistance Programme

This special programme gives all our staff access to confidential support and counselling via a 24/7, 365 days a year, freephone helpline. Staff are also able to access free face-to-face counselling support if needed.

Practical and professional advice on legal, financial, health or personal issues with specialist advisers is available through this too. There is also a wealth of guidance, support and self-help materials available on their website [www.employeeassistance.org.uk](http://www.employeeassistance.org.uk)

## Cycle2Work scheme

Staff can apply for a voucher up to the value of £1,000 towards the cost of a new bike, accessories or even an electronic bike. This deduction from salary is made before tax and National Insurance, meaning savings of up to 42%.

## Employee Rewards

All our employees can benefit from our online Employee Rewards hub. This gives access to lots of money-saving schemes, with discounts on everything from popular high street purchases to luxury days out, gym memberships and healthcare.

### Benefits include:

- A discount scheme with over 2,500 retailers including: Argos, John Lewis, Sainsbury's, Currys PC World and B&Q
- Discounts of up to 50% at over 10,000 restaurants
- Gym discounts on corporate rates at over 3,500 gyms and health clubs
- Travel discounts with Cosmos, Virgin, First Choice, Thomas Cook, Thomson and Kuoni
- Corporate rates at Carzone on over 20,000 new and approved cars.
- GP on-demand video service: this includes a maximum 20-min wait for face-to-face video appointment with diagnosis, prescriptions and referrals being issued.

“

There has been strong and effective support and challenge from the Trust. It's not just a box ticking exercise, it's about the children and ensuring they get excellent teaching and a broad curriculum, so that they can thrive now and in their adult life.”

JANET LIGHTFOOT  
Headteacher of St Matthew's





[www.sdbemat.org](http://www.sdbemat.org)



**Southwark Diocesan  
Board of Education  
Multi-Academy Trust**  
Developing Church of England Education