



**THE DWASTRE**  
Education Trust



***'I can do all things through him who strengthens  
me...'*** Philippians 4:13

**Headteacher Application Pack**

**February 2024**

# Welcome from our MAT CEO

Dear applicant,

Thank you for your interest in Rattlesden CE Primary Academy. We welcome your interest in becoming the next headteacher at this fantastic school.

Thedwastre Education Trust was formed in 2016 and Rattlesden is a founder member. The Trust values strong collaboration between our schools and schools from outside the Trust. Our headteachers are mutually supportive and work well together. If you become the Headteacher at Rattlesden, you will be joining a well established and supportive team and will be welcomed by all.

The Trust's key principles are outlined below. Essentially, we aim to support schools to ensure all pupils achieve their full potential through our collaborative and supportive approach.

Headteachers meet as a group with our CEO once each month and more often on an individual basis. As a Headteacher in our MAT, you will never be on your own.

The Trust ultimately has responsibility for the educational standards across the MAT and we work closely with senior school leaders to ensure that this remains the top priority. The Trust also has responsibility for the finances of all schools within the MAT but works closely with Headteachers and local governors to ensure that the needs of the children are central to all decision making.

Thedwastre Multi-Academy Trust provides a well-developed framework to ensure our Headteachers do not face the challenges of school leadership alone: indeed, the MAT expects to see even more joint-working and the sharing of ideas and responsibilities – by classroom staff, subject leads, headteachers and governors. Importantly, the MAT structures take much of the administrative and policy burden away from individual schools and heads. As Headteacher of one of our Academy schools, you can expect to play a significant role in contributing to and influencing the decisions of the Trust's Leadership Group, where the Heads of each School are encouraged to collaborate, support and challenge, to improve children's attainment and progress across the Trust.

Our schools retain a lot of autonomy with regards to the curriculum and education and each school maintains its uniqueness. Where schools need additional support, the Trust will broker this and provide the necessary support.

If you would like an informal chat in advance of submitting your application, please feel free to email me to arrange this – [ceo@thedwastreeducationtrust.org.uk](mailto:ceo@thedwastreeducationtrust.org.uk)

Good luck in your application and I look forward to meeting you at interview should you be successful.

**Phil Mackay, BA, MBA, NPQEL**  
**Chief Executive**





Spring 2024

Dear Applicant

I am delighted that you have expressed an interest in the post of Headteacher at Rattlesden CE Primary Academy, and that you share our belief that we should aim to educate and nurture each child within a loving and caring Christian environment to inspire every child to achieve their full potential. Our school family endeavour to be their BEST: Believe, Embrace & Shine Together! I hope you find the enclosed literature provides useful information about the aims and values of the School. We welcome visits to help you consolidate your understanding of who we are and what is important to us.

The successful applicant will be taking on this role at a wonderful school with a strong and committed staff. We are a church school that enables children to flourish, providing a wide range of enrichment activities that go well beyond SATs and league tables and our pupils excel as a result of the hard work and dedication of our staff in every aspect of school life, and beyond. The governing body includes people with a wide range of experience who are fully committed to the success of the school. We are engaged with all aspects of school life, while supporting the Head in their role as leader.

The school is firmly rooted in our community and have served many families for generations. We are proud of our many achievements and we look forward to working with the next Headteacher to continue this journey.

Please be aware that the post may involve some teaching to cover staff absence and/or PPA cover, in addition to any teaching you wish to offer to support excellence in the school.

As a School, we place a high value on our engagement with the local community, and are keen to maintain our links with the parish church and various local clubs, organisations and businesses that are part of our thriving village, and which offer such important opportunities and enrichment for our children and families. By placing ourselves at the heart of our community, we can ensure the school continues to embrace children from the broad range of backgrounds within our catchment.

Given these priorities, we are looking for a Headteacher who will lead the School with high expectations of children and staff, and ensure children make excellent academic progress. The successful candidate will welcome challenge and, in turn, be ready to continue to challenge children and staff to ensure our pupils succeed to the best of their ability. The successful applicant will embrace collaborative working with other Headteachers in the Trust. You will need to be an effective communicator who knows how to motivate pupils, parents and staff alike, and gain their respect and trust.

Rattlesden school is a very special place and the next Headteacher is in an extremely fortunate position and has a superb base from which to continue building our successes.

Thank you in advance for applying for this role.

Good luck with your application; if it is successful, I look forward to meeting you at interview.

Yours faithfully

**Gill Marchant, BA, MTh, PGCE**  
**Chair of Governors**





## Background Information

Rattlesden CE Primary Academy is a mixed school for children aged between 4 and 11 years, situated in an attractive village between the market towns of Bury St Edmunds and Stowmarket. There are currently 125 children on our roll from Reception to Year 6.

Serving the village of Rattlesden and surrounding area (particularly Brettenham, Felsham, Gedding and Drinkstone), the school enjoys the advantages of a rural setting, whilst being easily accessible from the A14. The school benefits from excellent facilities. A mix of Victorian classrooms and new additions, all classes are light, airy and well-equipped. The school grounds are a particular asset with a playing field surrounded by farmland and include an outdoor classroom, gym trail, library and wildlife area that we use as part of the curriculum.

Our families come from a wide range of backgrounds. We have developed a very positive relationship with all families and are proud of our partnership with parents. As a Church of England school, we have close connections with our local parish church and regularly hold services and events at the church. Our school is a place where all children flourish as individuals and develop a strong foundation for their future learning.

In 2014 the school became a full primary, with a smart new building for Year 6 pupils.

We are proud of our caring school community in which everyone is valued and respected. We are passionate and determined that every child succeeds to the best of their ability. We recognise pupils' strengths and encourage originality and creativity, developing confident, reflective learners.

We have a talented and dedicated staff team who are looking forward to continue the development of the school under the direction of their new Head teacher.

The school is organised into 5 classes:

Willow – Reception / Year 1

Maple – Y1 / Y2

Oak – Y3

Cedar – Y4 / Y5

Beech – Y5 / Y6

We are lucky to be supported by a great team of teaching assistants who work on group interventions and one to one with individual pupils as a fully involved part of the teaching team. Our office administrators are also an important part of our staff team and often the first point of contact for parents. A full list of staff is available on the school website.

The School offers pupils a regular breakfast club and after school club. We also provide a wide range of after-school and lunchtime clubs to enrich and extend opportunities in STEM, sports and the arts. The School is proud of its awards including: Linguamarque Bronze award, Primary Science Quality Mark, Music Mark. We were also awarded the Schools Games Gold Award in 2022-23.

Our most recent Ofsted inspection confirmed that Rattlesden is a good school. The inspection report noted the following:

- Pupils' achievements in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2 are good. Pupils' progress continues to improve year on year.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about how happy and safe their children are. They praise the care and support that the school provides for their children.
- Leaders and governors are ambitious for the pupils and provide a good quality of education.
- Leaders provide pupils with a rich and creative curriculum that underpins teaching and learning. Pupils build their knowledge well across a range of subjects. The quality of pupils' work in art is particularly impressive.
- Leadership of the early years is effective. Adults provide precise teaching so that children make good progress from their individual starting points. They are well prepared for Year 1.
- Rattlesden is an inclusive school which is at the heart of the small, rural village community. Staff develop strong relationships with pupils and their families.
- Staff use their knowledge of pupils effectively when planning learning. As a result, individual pupils' needs are well met.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about learning. They enjoy school and are kind and caring towards each other.

Our most recent SIAMS inspection also graded us as good in all areas. The inspection report highlighted:

- Pupils embody the Christian values. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent. The school's Christian vision and associated values underpin the commitment of leaders for every pupil to flourish.
- Highly effective leadership and consistent high quality teaching have resulted in significant improvements in pupils' outcomes. Pupils including the most vulnerable, make at least good, and often accelerated progress. This leads to attainment that is well above national averages in all measures.
- In order to equip pupils to flourish academically there is a rich and broad curriculum. This is complimented by a varied range of extra-curricular activities.
- The mutual and substantial partnership between school and church is valued by everyone, whether or not they belong to the local Christian community.

We know that trips and visits are one of the most enjoyable parts of a child's school life and they can provide invaluable opportunities for embedding learning as part of a memorable experience. We encourage every class teacher to organise regular educational visits to fit in with their curriculum plans. These trips range from our regular "welly walks" in the village to residential visits for older pupils.

Our parents are very supportive and we have an active Friends of Rattlesden School who raise valuable funds for the school, and help us in many other ways. Parents are welcomed into school as partners in their child's education and we hold regular assemblies and share mornings which parents are encouraged to attend.

We are looking for a new Headteacher who will continue to develop the strong team ethos in the school, whilst providing effective leadership to ensure that all children thrive. When asked what children would expect from their new Headteacher, members of our school council said:

*"we would like them [the new Headteacher] to be kind, and to keep some of the things we enjoy, especially the 'spellathon' and awards, etc"*  
*They wanted 'stuff' to be run the same, still entertaining and funny (their words!)*  
*They would like a HT that is a bit sporty, would improve the outside area (including hopscotch). But apart from that would not like much to change!*



## Our School Vision

At Rattlesden Church of England Primary Academy, we aim to educate and nurture each child to their full potential within a loving and caring Christian environment.

Our focus in all areas is to be the best we can be. Rooted firmly in, and drawing strength from the Christian faith, we strive to include all who choose to be part of our school family, recognising that success depends on working together and supporting each other.

Our school family endeavour to be their BEST: Believe, Embrace & Shine Together!

At our Church of England school, our vision is that our pupils will leave Rattlesden as confident, resilient and reflective individuals who live their lives through a foundation of strong Christian Values and develop a lifelong love of learning along with a curiosity and respect for the world and people around them.

At Rattlesden we try to develop spirituality by being creative and engaging, by engaging with nature and the world around us, by enabling our pupils to connect with stories and experiences, by empowering our children to ask and respond to questions, by promoting play and creativity and by developing relationships, by providing a sense of belonging and by the use of prayer and symbols.

Spirituality is felt within ourselves by individuals and hence cannot be taught or measured - instead being something that needs to be nurtured and given the right conditions and space to grow. Therefore, we acknowledge that spirituality is deeply personal and so we afford every individual with the space and opportunity to develop along their own spiritual journey.

Throughout their time at our school we aim for the children:

- To have empathy with others – showing kindness and humility
- Understand, appreciate and care for the world around them
- Develop and demonstrate curiosity
- Increase in resilience and courage
- Respect and love themselves and others
- Be reflective and mindful

## Our School Values

### **Believe Embrace Shine Together**

**'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.' Philippians 4:13**

#### **Believe**

We respect the beliefs of others and expect the same in return.  
We believe in ourselves and understand the importance of perseverance.

#### **Embrace**

We embrace one another within our Christian school community.  
We embrace a passion for learning, and the challenges it brings.

#### **& Shine Together**

We are shining beacons of God's love.  
We are proud of our school and all we do, setting a shining example to others.

## **Our school curriculum**

The School offers a broad and balanced curriculum, which makes learning come alive. This bespoke curriculum, designed to apply basic skills in a meaningful way, interleaves our school 'threads', which allows pupils to reflect and build upon prior learning and bridges the Key Stages to build a holistic approach.

Our 'threads' are: - **Discoveries & Inventions, Art & Architecture, Beliefs & Values, Environment & Sustainability and Key Figures.**

Our creative teachers provide well planned, sequenced lessons that excite the pupils and allow them to achieve their full potential.

Our school prides itself on using the outdoors on a regular basis, with regular Forest School activities for all children.

Our school website is constantly updated and contains information on the curriculum and how parents can support their children. It is interactive and offers links to self-learning.

## **School improvement through partnership**

We recognise that primary headship, particularly in small rural schools, is a demanding and sometimes lonely job. On 1 January 2016, therefore, the school became an academy with three local primary schools, to form our own education trust, Thedwastre Education Trust (TET). As a small rural school, we recognise the value in working collaboratively to improve outcomes for all children. TET provides a supportive structure within which we maintain our individual school identities, whilst offering extended opportunities for all pupils and staff to share best practice and offer challenge between schools. We believe that our active engagement in the MAT, and the structure of mutual collaboration and review that this group of schools provides, secures fantastic support for a new head while constantly challenging us to improve.

The website for the Thedwastre Education Trust can be found [here](#):

The Trust provides opportunities for Headteachers to work collaboratively and visit each other's schools regularly. The Trust also organises subject leader networks, joint CPD and coaching for all headteachers.

The school is also part of the Thurston Partnership, a thriving group of local schools in the Thurston area, and Thurston Community College, the local secondary school. Originally formed to support the reorganisation of schools into a two-tier structure, the Partnership continues to provide a way for the College and its feeder schools to work together on areas of joint concern and to improve the transition for pupils between primary and secondary phases.

## **Community**

Rattlesden village lies in a sweeping valley between the market towns of Bury St Edmunds and Stowmarket. There is a strong community spirit within the village which is evident in the church, chapel, two pubs, and numerous organisations. The post office and village shop, which is run by volunteers, is a good example of the dedication and enthusiasm of village residents. Rattlesden has a playing field and playground which is much used, and is where we hold sports events and sports day. Various classes and clubs take place at Rattlesden Pavilion, including Friday Night Social, an early evening social for families with children



As a school, we have strong links with the Church and Rattlesden pre-school, and work closely together. The Five Bells pub supports our PTA with events, particularly our annual Duck Race which is held each May at the Five Bells pub meadow, and our Friends of Rattlesden School support the community council at events such as Rattlesden Fireworks Night.

We are all keen for this rural parish to stay a little gem, and villagers including our parents, staff and governing body members work together to ensure this.

## **How to apply**

Visits to our School are strongly encouraged. Please contact the School office on 01449 736335 to arrange a suitable date. If you would like an informal conversation with our Trust Chief Executive, Phil Mackay, you are welcome to contact him at [ceo@thedwastreeducationtrust.org.uk](mailto:ceo@thedwastreeducationtrust.org.uk) to arrange a mutually convenient time to meet or discuss the opportunity over the phone.

Please complete the application form and complete all sections fully. Please note that we do not accept CVs. Candidates are advised to use the job description and person specification to prepare your personal statement in support of your application. Please return your application to [admin@rattlesdenprimaryschool.co.uk](mailto:admin@rattlesdenprimaryschool.co.uk) by e-mail by midday on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2024. Interviews are scheduled to take place on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> March.