

About the trust

The Cranmer Education Trust is a mixed trust including (currently) 5 secondary schools and 5 primary across Oldham and Rochdale. We also run Manchester Nexus SCITT which trains 50-66 new teachers per annum, mainly secondary. All our schools take ITT trainees, and use the SCITT as a valuable source for recruitment. In addition we run the East Manchester Teaching School Hub which provides the ECF and NPQs for Oldham and Tameside, and many schools in other LAs, for 2 main reasons – we are strategic partners with University College London, so our programmes are research led and academically grounded, and UCL allows strategic partners to customize for context, which gives us local ownership. We are not “delivering” a corporate powerpoint. Our schools provide facilitators for this work, which supports professional development. We also run our own Institute which provides bespoke CPD and school-to-school support led by SLEs from our schools and our wider hub network. All our schools are part of our curriculum networks.

How we work

Our ethos and culture is to grow and develop our people to become thinking leaders, now and for the future, to ensure a diversity of perspectives and experience within the Trust. It makes more demands on leaders, but professionally we believe it is more satisfying, and it supports continuous development grounded in the reality in schools. In some areas where compliance is crucial, we are quite centralized and prescriptive (see below) though always working through school leaders. In educational improvement there is more agency, and schools that are strong, secure and continually improving have complete agency to develop and help raise the bar for everyone.

Our philosophy of headteacher leadership and the roles and responsibilities of different paths was formalized in April 2025 and will be available if requested for short-listed candidates.

Executive Headteacher

An Executive headteacher has responsibility for more than one school. In Cranmer we have had temporary executive headteacher roles when a school, for whatever reason, does not have a substantive permanent head and one of our heads is asked to take on a temporary, part-time role working with an interim head or head of school. That provides different experience, and enables members of the Exec Headteacher's own SLT to take on more responsibility for a period. However, it is a temporary arrangement: the trust board believes that the CET needs a breadth and diversity of school leaders who do the whole job and support each other.

Where we centralise and are more prescriptive

The trust central team is deliberately small to maximize the resource in our schools. The central team set the policies, systems and protocols for all business issues i.e.

- Finance
- HR
- IT, cyber
- Estates
- Operations and contracts
- Data Protection, GDPR, complaints management
- Marketing and communications

They work with business managers and relevant staff in our schools to ensure trust policy is implemented properly and risk is minimized: i.e. there is financial propriety, all employees have the same terms, conditions, policies and rights under a single employer; ICT is strategically developed and we are all on the same Microsoft tenant; our estates strategy identifies priorities and forward plans so that central funding is allocated to ensure every school has what they need for the young people. Senior executive officers also work directly with headteachers e.g. to strategically plan budgets and make informed decisions, to manage staffing issues such as staff conduct, capability, grievances, etc.

In this respect our business functions are very centralized, but are implemented in schools by school staff with trust guidance and support.

Governance Support is also centrally managed. Our schools have local governing committees appointed by the trust board which have delegated responsibility for oversight of

the quality of education in its broadest sense on behalf of the community the school serves. They also fulfil statutory roles re oversight of safeguarding, SEND, Health & Safety and exclusions. Governance agendas and minutes are managed centrally. The format of the headteacher's report is agreed collectively by heads at strategic leadership group. Top level reporting of data on attendance, PA, outcomes and progress is collected from schools and presented in standardized reports by arrangement with the data team at Blue Coat.

Where there is agency

All our schools are at different stages of improvement and there is no one size fits all.

We do not have single curriculums, though model curriculums developed by different schools are available as a basis for schools which need them. We are now introducing a common GCSE mock for Maths and English in Year 11 to support departmental leadership and knowledge of standards and gaps. The collaborative ethos of the trust, reinforced through half-termly strategic leadership meetings, means that heads and senior staff contact each other e.g. on literacy or principles of pedagogy and how CPD has been developed to support these. We are currently codifying the resources we continue to develop and update through leadership networks and the curriculum leader communities to ensure these are relevant, easily accessible, and can be downloaded for customization in departments and schools.

Practically all our School Improvement capacity is in our schools – in our leaders who become accredited SLEs, or who have led their schools to a strong Ofsted and outcomes position. Our operating model sets out the levels of support a school would receive, based on need, and the opportunities for leadership across the trust.

Saddleworth is RI and therefore has a Team Around the School (TAS) in addition to the universal provision of safeguarding and behaviour, networks and frameworks, our leadership communities for curriculum leaders. The TAS includes 2 Executive Headteachers from Blue Coat and St Anne's (see above) taking responsibility for strategic leadership and forward planning. They are supported by a consultant who is working with the new pastoral structure. The school has additional SIP support. At the time of advertising an interim headteacher is being appointed to lead the school operationally until the arrival of the new substantive headteacher.