



People Strategy

Flourishing together
Version 1



Together, pursuing life in all its fullness

John 10:10

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“Where there are few flourishing adults, there will be few flourishing children

Swaner, LE and Wolfe, (2021) p215. ”



Introduction

The Trust's first People Strategy has been developed with the staff of the Trust in order to deliver the people priorities which underpin delivery of one of the Trust's organisational strategy priorities: flourishing adults.

The priorities which inform this strategy have grown from the strengths identified by staff within the annual staff survey, input from all staff during Trust Conference days and through consulting with key stakeholders.

Staff within our Trust feel a deep sense of belonging, they benefit from supportive colleagues and approachable leaders. There is a strong sense of teamwork within our Trust. These are strengths we will continue to build upon.

Context

The sector has identified challenges which the Trust will rise to address in respect of a shortage of talent within the workforce, particularly teachers. There are also challenges to workforce resilience and wellbeing (CST National School Trust Report Sept 2024). Our Trust starts from a position of strength in comparison to many but there is no room for complacency. The priorities within our People Strategy must channel our resources and efforts to best enable staff to thrive.

Flourishing staff

The Trust will only be able to meet its mission of enabling the children within its schools to flourish by recruiting, developing and supporting staff. As a trust made up of Church of England academies, we embrace the belief that “where there are few flourishing adults, there will be few flourishing children” Swaner, LE and Wolfe, (2021) p215. We believe that work should be rewarding and that providing work which is purposeful and meaningful will achieve this: work which develops the individual personally and professionally, enabling them to thrive. In order to do this, we must recruit staff who are drawn to our purpose and who engage with our values and mission. In return, our staff will benefit from feeling included and from the sense of belonging which 81% staff report (Staff survey 2025). We will give access to flexible working where we can, to a work environment which gives people a voice and which provides job satisfaction, and we will provide sector leading professional development.

Our Trust and Academy leaders will develop staff, be approachable to them and thoughtful about their wellbeing. Leaders will role model our values, continuing their own professional development whilst encouraging and supporting others to reach their full potential. We will focus on retaining staff by developing them and providing learning opportunities which increase their skills and knowledge.





Flourishing staff

We want work to be rewarding, with meaningful opportunities for personal and professional growth.



Attract

People will know who we are, what our values and expectations are and will want to work for us

Our recruitment information and information about the Trust will state our offer as an employer, which includes membership of the Local Government or Teachers' Pension Scheme as well as access to an employee assistance scheme and lifestyle discounts.

As a result, potential job applicants who align to our expectations and values as well as the needs of specific jobs will want to work for us. The experience of applicants who apply to work for us will be positive, ensuring that even those who may be unsuccessful for a particular role consider applying again in future and speak positively about us within their communities.

In 2024/25 we implemented a new Applicant Tracking System with sector-specific recruitment advertising which increased our reach to candidates and allows us to develop talent pools.

In 2025/26 we will focus on improving the candidate experience. The Trust vacancy webpage will be overhauled to promote the benefits of working for us in a clear format. We will also continue to reduce the workload on academy leaders in administering staff recruitment while remaining compliant with Safer Recruitment practices.



Measured by:

Monitoring of the volume of job applications, number of unfilled vacancies versus successful appointments, collection of feedback from job applicants and recruiting managers, staff survey results on alignment with organisation values.





Welcome

New staff will be welcomed to their team and provided with the information and tools to do their job

Staff will be onboarded effectively and efficiently via a combination of the best use of technology and face to face local induction to the job and the workplace.

In 2024/25 we implemented induction checklists to ensure all the essential information and links to support are passed on to new starters. Onboarding now takes place via the staff recruitment platform, ensuring referencing and vetting checks can be easily tracked and retained.

In 2025/26 we will focus on further improvements to induction in light of feedback, working with the recruitment platform provider and with academies to do so. We will develop induction resources, such as welcome videos and Trust-wide welcome days.



Measured by:

Feedback from new starters via a new starter questionnaire issued to those in their first six months of employment.





Engage

Staff feel aligned to Trust values, mission and culture and want to stay with us

Staff are focussed on achieving school improvement and understand how their contribution fits into this. Staff within the Trust value the supportive colleagues they work with (86% in 2025) and the professional support from their leadership (74% in 2025). Staff feel a strong sense of belonging which in turn leads them to give their best at work and remain in better health. People feel heard and valued. Leaders are developed, staff receive regular communications about their academy and the Trust. Staff feel able to contribute their skills, experience and enthusiasm at work. Staff feel listened to and recognised for their contributions. Staff feel as though their work has meaning and real impact. Staff see the Christian ethos in action within the Trust and its academies.

In 2024/25 the CEO newsletter began to be sent out to all staff every week, improving communications across the Trust and sharing spotlight news from the academies. Job satisfaction remained above the sector average (+6%) and the staff survey reported an 81% belonging score.

In 2025/26 we will continue to embed our values and culture into everything we do. We will hold a whole-Trust Conference Day in February 2026 to promote cross-Trust working, communication, understanding and collaboration. Staff will see the progression routes available to them both within their current career path and others. We will support line managers with workforce planning, including succession planning and talent development.



Measured by:

Staff are clear about the vision and values of the organisation. Staff survey measures and voluntary turnover rate our staff retention above the sector. The belonging score within the staff survey results increases year on year. Sickness absence rates are below the sector average when benchmarked to other schools and Trusts via government school workforce reports and benchmarking against other Trusts. Staff experiencing our Christian ethos at work is rated positively by staff in the staff survey (over 60%).





Embrace diversity

All staff feel included and able to contribute fully



Measured by:

Staff declare their equality characteristics so that the Trust can monitor the impact of policy and practice on people with protected characteristics. Staff survey feedback shows that those with protected characteristics do not feel disadvantaged in the workplace. The gender pay gap is narrowing year on year.

Our staff feel part of a team, with supportive colleagues and approachable leaders. We will raise knowledge, understanding, awareness and we will identify actions which will increase inclusion and diversity within the workforce. We will encourage the formation of informal staff network groups. Awareness raising activities within schools will also promote awareness and understanding among adults e.g. Black History month, LGBTQ+ awareness month, neurodiversity awareness. Resources are shared across the Trust and there is signposting to further guidance and advice from organisations with expertise.

In 2024/25 we focussed on encouraging staff to record their diversity data via the HR database's self service portal. Collection of this data forms part of the set up of new starters. We began development of menopause awareness and introduced a Menopause Commitment.

In 2025/26 we will focus on improving the numbers of staff declaring disabilities and other protected personal characteristics, to better inform the development of practices which enable the inclusion of everyone. We will seek formal recognition via the Disability Confident employer scheme for recruitment and retention of staff with disabilities. We will enable a supportive network of Mental Health First Aiders for staff and invite other staff networks to form. Flexible working will be supported wherever possible.



Clear expectations

Leaders are clear of their strategic direction and priorities and communicate this to others

Role needs and expectations are set at induction, during probation and at annual appraisal. Where performance falls short of expectations, staff are supported to achieve the standard and managed with openness, fairness and dignity. Performance standards are known and all staff are accountable for delivering their contribution. Staff have performance objectives set relevant to their role and stage of career. The objectives are stretching and will incorporate opportunities for professional development. Performance and appraisal policies support the delivery of clear expectations and guidance available to leaders and staff enables this to happen in practice. Where there are performance concerns, staff are guided by improvement plans and training or support to help them achieve a satisfactory level. Staff are expected to demonstrate

behaviours in line with our ethos and will be guided by leaders who role model these behaviours.

In 2024/25 we began development of a Trust-wide probationary procedure to support clarity of expectations for new starters.

In 2025/26 we will implement training, coaching and support for leaders to develop their people management capabilities. We will map out expectations for teaching staff and for support staff at all levels of their career journey. We will provide support and resources to line managers to enable them to have meaningful conversations with staff which are focussed on their people's professional development. We will update the performance review process and associated forms to make the process clearer and more effective.



Measured by:

Staff receive at least annual appraisal and regular feedback on their performance. This is measured via the staff survey. Leadership dynamics will continue to be rated above the sector average.





Develop

Staff have opportunities to grow professionally to meet their potential

We will provide opportunities for learning and professional growth for individuals and set out career paths to give visibility of the different roles and professions available to all staff within the Trust. The opportunity to share best practice and learn from others from other academies and teams will support wider skills development. We will make best use of our government levy funding to support all staff with skills and career development and encourage support and teaching staff to take up training and development. Our people will be encouraged to develop in a way which prioritises integrity and care for others, rather than simply developing their technical skills and knowledge.

In 2024/25 we formally removed the link between performance and pay within our policies, enabling a greater focus on professional and career development. We promoted the availability of apprenticeship levy funded programmes to all staff and strongly encouraged take-up. We are using

our apprenticeship levy funds strategically to increase the skills of our whole workforce, beyond the provision of teacher CPD.

In 2025/26 we will be providing focussed support and training for Teaching Assistants to support their physical and mental safety and wellbeing. We will be providing Trust-wide opportunities for experienced teachers to develop their knowledge and experience beyond their own academy to support their further professional development. We will provide development opportunities across the Trust for those who want to grow professionally, identified through appraisal conversations. Leadership development will incorporate Christian values with a number of existing and aspiring leaders supported through the flourishing emerging leader and flourishing leader/systems leader programme. Our middle leaders, in both teaching and support roles will have targeted development to deliver our strategic priority of strong leadership at all levels.



Measured by:

Communication of career pathways to all staff, the provision of and take up of development opportunities such as training, mentoring. We will analyse and report data of those who are promoted or who move into other roles within the Trust. Staff survey responses will show that the majority of staff each year report positively about their opportunities to develop.



Wellbeing

we will enable our people to optimise their physical, mental & spiritual wellbeing so that they can flourish at work

Our people will have a commitment to our values and a strong sense of belonging. We will provide work with purpose, which is capable of enriching the lives of those who work with us. Work and the workplace will align with and support the values of the people within our Trust so that we are an employer of choice. Working with the children in the Trust brings joy and staff value their supportive colleagues and approachable leaders. Our leaders encourage openness and are approachable to staff. All staff know how to raise any concerns and feel empowered to do so. Where practical we will support teaching staff in carrying out PPA work from home. We will establish a network of mental health champions, train people in mental health first aid and provide a confidential employee helpline for counselling and advice. We will encourage academies to offer staff a “golden day” off to support their wellbeing e.g. to rest, reconnect, volunteer or participate in a spiritual retreat.

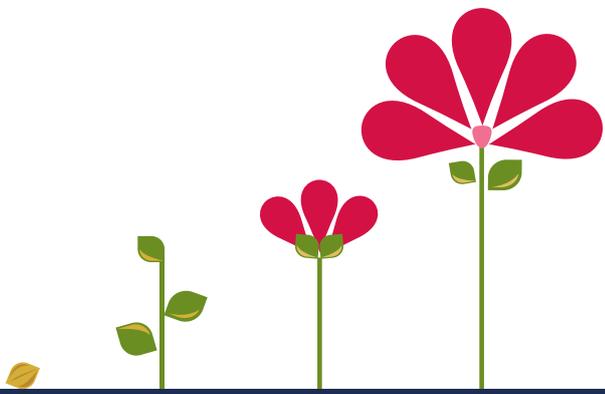
In 2024/25 we asked staff about what brings them joy and what they enjoyed about working for us, informing the development of the People Strategy.

In 2025/26 we will provide resources and support to address the impact of pupil behaviour on staff as well as continuing to provide an Employee Assistance Programme to support the mental health of our people. We will develop a staff network focussed on mental wellbeing and support for Mental Health First Aiders. We will provide opportunities for staff to have time for spiritual reflection e.g. via access to a quiet space to do so. Managers will lead their teams with integrity, humility and the ethical principles of servant leadership, prioritising the growth, well-being and care for their team members. We will continue to focus on workload reduction by standardisation of the curriculum and assessment as well as sharing resources. We will also seek process efficiency to remove duplication of effort or unnecessary effort.



Measured by:

Staff absence data shows absence levels are below the sector average. The staff survey results show that staff feel able to voice concerns and that they are able to raise personal issues with a member of the leadership team. The percentage of staff rating workload positively in the staff survey increases each year.



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