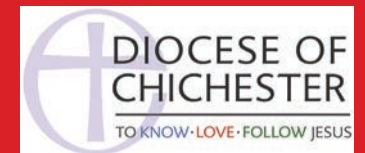




Hurst Education Trust

An introduction

Hurst
EDUCATION TRUST



About the Hurst Education Trust

We are a recently formed Multi-Academy Trust set up by Hurstpierpoint College in collaboration with the Diocese of Chichester. Our Trust exists to provide a unique offer to local schools in the Mid-Sussex area.

Academic excellence is the foundation of a Hurst education, because we believe it opens doors to the future. Therefore, every child is challenged and supported along the way in our friendly and warm community.

We are ambitious for each of our pupils and who they can become. Each child has the opportunity to access all the schools have to offer, together with additional facilities and resources at the College, and we encourage each one to engage and enjoy all aspects of school life.

We offer our schools:

- A high-quality school improvement support package focused on the “Good to Outstanding” journey.
- A comprehensive administrative provision, including but not limited to: Human Resources, Payroll, Finance Support, Health & Safety advice, Data Protection Service, and IT Support.
- Access to the College’s facilities, including sports and academic provision together with specialist facilities including the theatre, the farm, and the chapel.
- A substantial CPD package for teaching and support staff.

Importantly, schools retain their individuality, including their name, uniform and curriculum. There is no ‘one size fits all’ approach.



Common Values and Ethos

What are the values of the Trust and how do you implement them?

The Trust's vision and values are set out in the infographic on the right. The vision and values were created together with the schools within the Trust, to provide a clear direction and purpose. We strongly believe that the values shape the culture and behaviour of the Trust and are delighted to see a high level of commonality between the Trust's values and our school's values.





Common Values and Ethos

Can we retain our own motto and values, or would we need to adopt the values and identity (e.g. uniform) of the Trust?

Each school continues to maintain its own unique identity within its community, including links with other schools and other local organisations. For example, the name of the school or uniform does not change, and the school maintains its own vision, ethos, and values. Practically, logos, websites and other marketing or other similar materials are school specific although the Trust does ask schools to acknowledge their partnership with the Trust.

What are the Trust's current priorities?

In alignment with our vision and values, to ensure all schools deliver an excellent education and experience to every child in every school, making sure they are given every opportunity to be the best they can be.

In practice, this is achieved through several strands with a clear focus on learning and teaching, enabling leadership and the wider staff to direct more time at pupil-benefitting

activities, taking a shared/collaborative approach across the Trust, developing all staff through effective use of CPD and, wherever possible, enabling pupils to engage with the broader aspects of extracurricular activities of sport, drama, music, etc.

What is the Trust most proud of having achieved?

We are proud of the way in which we have established a Trust that is fostering positive change in our schools and improved outcomes for our children, not through a top-down approach but by establishing an ethos of collaboration and "togetherness" which encourages those who join us to share their best practice with others and leverage off the best practice that is taking place in other schools. This collaboration works at all levels, with regular meetings between the Heads, termly subject leaders' meetings, HET Subject Leaders working across schools, teachers observing colleagues in different HET schools (including from Hurstpierpoint College) and pupils working together.

Finance

How does funding work in the MAT?

Each school's budget is calculated by the ESFA using local formula and paid to the Trust in twelve monthly instalments. The Trust allocates the full funding to each individual school.

The Trust charges a membership levy which funds a number of services that replace services the school may currently procure from the Local Authority or a private provider.

What financial position should a school be in when you take them on?

All schools should be able to demonstrate medium-term financial viability. Schools should either be operating within a surplus budget or working towards this position.

What assurances can the Trust give as to its ongoing financial viability and probity? Can the Trust sustain the academy schools it serves?

The Trust sets a five-year rolling budget and is confident that it can maintain financial viability for the foreseeable future, as confirmed by the Trust's internal and external auditors.

The Trust is in the unique position of being supported by Hurstpierpoint College, a large successful independent school. Hurstpierpoint College provides significant direct and indirect financial and other support to the Trust.





How does the Trust determine the funding allocation to individual academies? Are resources pooled and reallocated or do schools retain their budget and are these then top sliced? What centralised services and functions are received in return for a top slice/pooled core budgets?

The Trust does not pool GAG funding. Each school is allocated funding by the ESFA.

The Trust membership cost is 3% of the core budget (i.e. not including Pupil Premium or other pupil-specific or self-generated funding). This compares very favourably to the MAT average of 6-8+%.

Through collaboration with the Trust and its existing schools, the Trust aims to provide schools with a range of benefits, summarised below:

- Increased access to a School Improvement provision which is both of high quality and tailored to meet the individual needs of the school. This provides an opportunity to add additional resource, and free up current leadership capacity

through collaboration with those within the Trust and other schools.

- Access to a wide range of efficient and high-quality back office and administrative functions, e.g. HR, payroll, health and safety and other services which are provided within the membership fee.
- In addition to the facilities available within the school, pupils can have access to facilities and arrangements provided by Hurstpierpoint College (e.g. sporting and academic facilities, swimming pool, Theatre and Chapel together with transport as needed.)

Where would our school sit in terms of priority? Particularly in terms of SEND provision and capital expenditure. How is Pupil Premium funding used/allocated?

All schools within the Trust, regardless of size, have equal standing within the Trust.

Pupil Premium funding continues to be allocated per school, with the school retaining autonomy to allocate funding in line with statutory guidance. Capital funding is currently provided through the ESFA's CIF scheme, although this will change to SCA when the Trust reaches the threshold to be allocated a formulaic allocation. Capital funding is allocated based on priority need. DFCG funding continues and is paid directly to each school.

What if any, autonomy is retained by the school for budget setting and purchasing decisions?

Schools within the Trust maintain autonomy to set budgets, provided they are financially balanced. As much support is provided to the Business Manager as is needed to set a balanced budget. Schools present prepared budgets to the Local Governors, who would recommend it for approval. As with all MATs, the Board of Trustees of the MAT are expected to formally approve the consolidated MAT budget and submit the information to the Department for Education.

Purchasing decisions are made at local level, although there are an increasing number of Trust-wide procurement contracts in place which schools can choose to participate in.





Governance

How does the Trustee Board ensure that its governance structure is clear, in keeping with its Articles of Association, and that those at regional, cluster and academy level understand their roles and responsibilities?

The Trust has a published Scheme of Delegation which is available on the Trust's website. The Scheme of Delegation clearly outlines the governance structure. It also details which level of governance is responsible for certain activities.

Induction and annual refresher training is provided for Trustees and all local governors.

How is the Trust's Board operated – how are new trustees recruited, their skills assessed?

The Board of Trustees meet five times per year. The Board has two subcommittees: Education and Standards, and the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee. A skills audit is carried out annually for all Trustees and Governors within the Trust and member schools.

Trustees are appointed to the Board based on the skills and experience they can bring to the Board. Of the current ten Trustees, six have worked as Headteachers with both primary and secondary experience. Other Trustees include those from a business, finance, local authority or Church background. Full details of the Trust's Board can be provided as required.

Do you still have a local governance board for the school?

All Hurst Education Trust schools have a Local Governing Body (LGB) in place. The Trust's Scheme of Delegation, which was written based on a DfE model with significant input from the Trust's founder schools, provides more detail as to the responsibilities and delegated powers of the LGB. We would be pleased to discuss this in more detail and respond to any specific queries as required.

Importantly, the Trust expect all LGBs to maintain staff and parental representation.

Where is the Trust's HQ and how accessible and responsive are you? How frequently do you visit your academies and how is best practice shared between different schools?

Hurst Education Trust is and will always be, a relatively small and geographically local family of like-minded schools. The local nature of our Trust ensures we can be responsive to the individual needs of the schools within the Trust. The Trust operates out of Hurstpierpoint College, located just outside of Hassocks, West Sussex.

The Trust's School Improvement Partner (SIP) and Director of Education work closely in tandem with the Headteacher and other members of SLT to identify strengths and areas of development for the school. Weekly visits by the Director of Education and up to twice termly visits by the SIP, mean that leadership has regular and readily available coaching and advice for improvement, closely aligned to the SDP. The CEO is also a regular visitor to the schools to discuss issues surrounding standards, progress, and the strategic vision.

As the Trust and the School develop the relationship, it is likely that the frequency of the visits will be reduced as necessary and by mutual agreement.

Do you still engage with our local authority for wider networks and support? Would we remain part of the local EIP and connected to our local and neighbouring schools?

The Trust recommends and encourages schools maintain existing relationships with other schools, including locality groups and EIPs. We are pleased that the Trust has a very positive relationship with the two Local Authorities we work within.





Staffing

How does the Trust recruit each academy's Principal/Head of school or are TUPE agreements followed?

As with all staff, existing Headteachers are transferred to the Trust and would maintain their Headteacher role within the school post-conversion. Appointment of new Headteachers will involve the Trust and the Local Governing Board.

The appointment of the wider Leadership team is delegated to the school and therefore the Trust would not introduce changes. If changes were suggested by the school (e.g. upon any change to individuals in these positions) the Trust would usually be invited to be part of the interview process, given the importance of these positions.

Are all staff TUPE'd into the new Academy and their contracts assured for a given period? What about staff on casual contracts?

All staff are transferred to the Trust, including staff on casual contracts. The Transfer of Undertakings and Protection of Employment regulations (TUPE) applies to all staff except those on casual contracts.

How are teaching and support staff supported and managed by the Trust? (CPD)

As the Trust grows, we envisage that all staff will have the opportunity for professional growth and career development taking on cross HET responsibilities and leading initiatives. For Leadership staff, this is likely to be opportunities to lead whole-Trust initiatives, support leaders in other schools or provide promotional opportunities to leadership positions in other schools, including Executive Headship should an opportunity arise.

The Trust is currently working with the HET Heads to shape the CPD offering for next year. We hope to provide CPD opportunities for training at all levels.

The Trust has, thus far, appointed seven HET wide Subject Leaders from staff across the Trust Schools. As well as offering the individual Subject Leaders a chance to take on Trust wide responsibilities, these Subject leaders work with colleagues offering support and guidance in matters pertaining to the various curriculum areas.

Are business and facilities staff (e.g. caretaker) managed across the Trust and how are they supported?

Whilst common in some Trusts, the Hurst Education Trust does not centralise the SBMs or Premises Manager role unless it is asked to assist in some functions (e.g. both Albourne and Ditchling now have Operations Managers with the Trust providing additional support. This was at the request of the schools.) Trust-wide working does provide for some efficiencies, and short-term absences can be well managed by the Trust if needed.

The SBM (or equivalent) is a key role within the School and the Trust ensures that these roles are remunerated properly. For existing staff, no downward change would be proposed.





Inclusion

How does your Trust support schools to be inclusive and can you give examples of this?

Inclusion within the HET is central to our core vision, that all children within our schools are equally respected, valued and should flourish and, with appropriate adaptations and support, regardless of their background and starting points, have access to the full curriculum both academic, pastoral and the wider co-curriculum.

This requires all HET schools to have a detailed knowledge of their children and have a robust SEND policy and procedures which identify individual needs and puts in place research-based interventions and provision which facilitate children's access to the full curriculum and activities within the school. This should be monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis.

Inclusion also requires the school to create a learning environment where all differences are respected and celebrated, and all children are treated of equal value. This should be strongly reflected in whole school values and seen, for example, in the rich diversity

of book choices in the library and texts choices in lessons; displays around the school; daily worship and assemblies.

What experience does the Trust have of delivering specialist facilities for SEND/Autism?

At the current time, no individual school within the Trust has a specialist facility for SEND/Autism although with the direction of travel of SEN nationally, the Trust is very keen to consider a specialist provision and has been in early discussion with a Local Authority to provide an SEN specialist provision locally. Several individual staff within the Trust have experience of working within specialist settings, including ASD, MLD, SLD and PMLD. Hurstpierpoint College has a sizeable SEND team with a particular focus on neurodivergence and support can and is provided to the Trust by this team as required.

HET SENCOs meet as a group to share best practice and pool their collective knowledge and experience to enhance SEND provision. They have for example recently collaborated on the use of INSIGHT to track the effectiveness of interventions.

What are your aspirations for PPE/ ECHP/SEND children and what specialist knowledge does your Trust hold in relation to children with complex needs?

The aspiration of the Trust is that all children, regardless of their needs or familial circumstances, achieve their full potential. The Trust is developing a strong provision for SEND across the existing schools coupled with healthy links with the Local Authority SEND team as evidenced by our work at the four schools within the Trust. The Trust both at the Centre and within the schools can offer advice and support to schools for SEND pupils.

How does your Trust look after the wellbeing of the children and staff that attend your academies?

The Trust understands that the wellbeing of children and staff is critical to a happy and successful school.

In addition to the activities planned by each school, the Trust utilises its relationship with Hurstpierpoint College to provide significant additional benefits and activities for children which contributes to their wider wellbeing. Recent examples include outdoor activity days, sports-based events, theatre and drama visits and a singing day.

The Trust has a comprehensive Employee Assistance Programme in place to support staff.





Quality of education

How does the Trust's Board ensure senior leaders within academies are challenged to improve the education of pupils, and what intervention would be used if improvement is not progressing according to plan at an academy?

The focus of the Trust is to improve and develop good schools to a position where the pupil experience can be described as outstanding, whether utilising the Ofsted descriptor or otherwise. Where there is underperformance, the school improvement led by Justin Smith and Michelle Zeidler will support and guide as appropriate. Clearly, it is expected that the leadership team will be actively involved in the design and implementation of any strategy to deal with any underperformance. In the unlikely event that such intervention does not yield the right result, the Trust may look outside of the Trust to provide external resource to assist.

Can you provide evidence of how the schools that form part of your Trust have improved their outcomes since joining you and what part has your Trust played in this?

Since the Trust was formed, there has been a focus on identifying the needs of the schools both individually and collectively and putting in place systems and strategies to support. This has been most notable in the Curriculum initiatives that have been introduced. For example, the initial schools joining the Trust all voiced their concern regarding the Phonics programmes they had in place. Collectively the schools chose to change to RWI and the HET co-ordinated and funded this change. A HET Phonics Subject Leader was also appointed to work with the schools. This has led to projected improvements in Phonics screening outcomes across the schools. Writing too was highlighted by the schools as an area which required improvement. For this academic year, collaboratively, the Heads chose to adopt a Writing strategy, "IAACW". Training and the initial set up costs were met by the

HET and, again, a HET Writing Lead was put in place. The quality in writing and progress in books is discernible and we anticipate will impact very positively on Writing outcomes across all year groups at the end of the year. Other curriculum improvements have taken place in Maths, Science, EYFS and Humanities. Our focus is now turning to Computing.

Do you use or promote any specific schemes of learning/schedules or are individual schools able to continue with tried and effective learning schemes when they join you?

What autonomy do schools within the academy trust have over their curriculum design and delivery?

The Trust understands that there is not a 'one-size fits all' model for schools, and whilst the preference is towards a level of collaboratively agreed and shared curriculum, modified as required for each school, there is no absolute requirement for this should an individual school have a successful, effective evidenced-based rationale for maintaining a different curriculum or model.

As a result, the majority of schools have chosen to work collaboratively, and the following schemes are in place:

- Phonics: Read, Write, Inc
- Writing: I Am A Clever Writer
- Science: White Rose Science
- Maths: White Rose Maths





Feedback

"Being part of the HET enables us to learn together as a community of schools.

Our children benefit greatly from the support and resources that Hurst offers, not to mention the guidance and expertise that are shared to help improve our school. Being part of the HET means encouraging the best quality education for our pupils whatever their starting point.

The ethos for HET is 'Together building a culture of excellence for all in everything we do' - it is very much a feeling of togetherness. This collaboration facilitates fantastic opportunities for professional development for our staff and with this support and guidance enables all our pupils, staff and wider community to flourish."

**Mrs Amy Clarke, Headteacher
Ditchling CE Primary and Nursery School**

"Joining HET has been a very positive experience, bringing a fresh perspective to delivering the best education possible and allowing us to share our expertise more widely.

Even before we joined HET, the Trust made the collaboration of its schools, who were going to join, its number one priority. Alongside access to a variety of resources and expertise (previously unavailable as a LA school), the Trust leaders have brought together the schools to develop a collaborative approach to providing the very best for all our children in the Trust schools.

Although only at the beginning of our journey, together we have identified how we can best deliver an ambitious curriculum, making sure each school maintains their own identity but with the shared purpose of providing high quality teaching and learning.

In addition, we now have services which support our school from school improvement to Human Resources, from finance to health and safety allowing the team at our school to focus on their core purpose of teaching and learning.

**Simon Hateley, Headteacher
St Wilfrid's C of E Primary School, Haywards Heath**

Find out more

Scan the QR codes to find out more about the Hurst Education Trust.



HET website (home)



Our Schools



Central Team



Policies and documents

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