

SAND Academies Trust

Why join us?



Supporting Achievement and Nurturing Development



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Introduction

Introduction

We are delighted to welcome you to SAND Academies Trust.

The Trust is based in Gloucestershire and was formed in June 2019 to enable and develop partnership working across a group of schools. We take pride in the fact that we are and commit to remaining a local MAT to ensure effective support throughout the Trust is possible.

There are currently five schools in the Trust: 4 special schools and 1 mainstream primary school. As a partnership of schools, we will achieve more together and therefore:

- ❖ Improve outcomes, opportunities and life chances for children and young people
- ❖ Offer more / wider support for their families
- ❖ Share and develop staff expertise

Our commitment

We take our responsibility for the education, safety and wellbeing of children and young people very seriously and are committed to playing our part in developing a quality educational provision across Gloucestershire, and beyond.

At the heart of all we do is a commitment to provide our schools with excellent school-to-school support, our pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum based on their needs and our staff with high-quality professional development enabling them to develop themselves and others.

Our Leaders

At the heart of our Trust is a group of highly skilled trustees who are carefully chosen for the expertise which they are able to contribute. Trustees are supported by a committed central team and effective business management systems which enable and ensure that the quality of education provision within our schools remains the top priority.

If you have any questions about the Trust which is not covered in this document, then please do get in touch.

Mr Martin Hughes
Chief Executive Officer

Mrs Kerry Brimfield
Chair of Trustees

Mrs Lyn Dance
Academy Strategic Consultant



Ethos and Vision

- ❖ The Trust will be child-centred, giving children and young people, families and carers a voice.
- ❖ Through collaboration we will challenge and maximise potential for our schools and individuals.
- ❖ We will ensure the individual identity of each school.
- ❖ We develop a climate which is open to change and development.
- ❖ We will shape the future by influencing services and provisions.
- ❖ Individuals will be empowered to make decisions using research-based evidence to ensure the quality of education has sound intent, clear implementation and accountable impact.
- ❖ Community engagement will be embedded in learning experiences, both the local community of the provision and the children and young people.
- ❖ Opportunities and activities will be guided to support transitions for future learning and employment.
- ❖ Skills and knowledge of all employees will be utilised to improve educational outcomes for children and young people regardless of the accommodation where they are placed.

Great to be part of a truly collaborative group which provides constructive challenge and support for staff at all levels.

Staff have benefitted from a range of opportunities to further their careers and deepen their knowledge and skills.

*Diane Taylor – Headteacher
The Milestone School*

Our Vision for 2026

We will deliver on our vision for 2026 through the delivery of three key priorities: to be the **schools of choice**, the **employer of choice** and the **trust of choice**.

In order to achieve the vision, we will focus on three strategic objectives, which capture our strategy for 2021 to 2026.

Each objective has associated targets and key indicators against which performance towards these targets will be measured.

Objective 1: To secure outstanding educational provision in all of our schools so that all of our children and young people are happy, cared for and want to learn, succeed and grow.

**Schools
of choice**

**Trust of
choice**

**Employer
of choice**

Objective 3: To maintain and develop our position as a secure and viable trust that creates a place where schools and communities can thrive, through which we positively impact upon the wider education system.

Objective 2: To further develop our offer to support and develop our staff and create an environment within which they feel valued and cared for.

Benefits of joining SAND

Pupils at the centre of all we do

We will ensure that the individual identity of each school in the Trust is retained and keep children at the heart of everything we do by:

- Providing a challenging and aspirational curriculum which allows all pupils to reach their full potential
- Ensuring excellent outcomes for pupils
- Sharing expertise to benefit all pupils
- Providing access to central leads for Safeguarding and Mental Health to support pupils, staff and families
- Engaging use of the local community as a learning environment
- Ensuring there is an excellent range of specialist interventions to support all learners

Ensuring the best outcomes for pupils in education, care and life opportunities

School Improvement

We have developed a school improvement model which enables incisive challenge, accountability and timely support for schools to ensure that all children within the Trust achieve the best possible outcomes.

Our school improvement strategy ensures that all schools benefit from:

- Collaboration and shared expertise
- School to school support
- School improvement – individual Headteachers will retain the responsibility of school improvement processes
- Annual evaluation processes
- External School Improvement Partner (SIP) to provide support and training
- Centralised talent and growth programme
- Continuous cycle of improvement

Benefits of joining SAND

Opportunities for staff

We recognise that our staff are our greatest asset who work relentlessly to achieve our aims. We believe that Continuing Professional Development for staff is key to overall school improvement. This includes unlocking and nurturing talent and potential in all members of staff and growing our future leaders. Investing in our staff skill set supports our pupil outcomes and drives school improvement.

SAND Training & Outreach

This service aims not only to provide training and support for our own Trust schools, but also to identify and co-ordinate expertise using best practitioners to:

- Play a greater role in recruiting and training new entrants to the profession (Initial Teacher Training)
- Lead peer-to-peer professional and leadership development
- Identify and develop leadership potential through succession planning and talent management
- Provide support for other settings and parents/carers

Terms and Conditions

Staff employed in schools who join the Trust will TUPE across on the same terms and conditions of employment – there will be no impact on the length of continuous service.

The Trust follows the School Teachers Pay and Conditions (STPCD) and offers the usual pension schemes for both teachers and support staff.

As a new Headteacher, I feel I have received, and still am receiving amazing support and help within my role and have been made to feel part of the team.

Central systems have also been supportive and valuable.

Nikki Teague – Headteacher, Battledown Centre

Benefits of joining SAND

Central Services

Our experienced and skilled Central Trust team provide business and operational expertise and support for all schools. Having centralised processes enables schools to have the time and resources to focus on their key priorities and aims in respect of the educational offer to their pupils.

Finance – each school sets their own budget in conjunction with the Finance Director and then manages their own set of cost centres.

Estates – year-round estates team providing support, dealing with compliance and contracts, and managing the maintenance of all sites including Health and Safety.

HR and Payroll – standardised Trust-wide policies and procedures with year-round support from the central team.

Recruitment – schools remain responsible for recruiting their own staff but benefit from central support with admin and procedural aspects.

IT – year-round technical support and development of IT infrastructure to support pupil development.

The Trust has a commitment to the wider community in which its schools are located and promotes the sharing of skills and expertise throughout.

Governance

We have a highly skilled, experienced and dedicated board of trustees who are supported by a knowledgeable Governance Professional.

Each school has a Local Advisory Board (LAB) who play a key part in the governance structure by supporting trustees to fulfil their strategic functions at a local level and within the powers delegated to them.

The Trust is committed to the development of their trustees and LAB members – a comprehensive induction programme is provided as well as initial and ongoing training opportunities.

The benefits of the governance structure in place:

- Overarching risk management and mitigation
- Ensuring equity of opportunity for all pupils and staff across the Trust
- Ensuring the Trust's strategy remains aspirational
- Promoting the ethos and vision of SAND Academies Trust

Frequently Asked Questions

How much autonomy does the school get?

The curriculum is agreed with the Director of School Improvement to ensure it meets the needs of the pupils and progress can be achieved. The appointment of staff remains the responsibility of the Headteacher alongside joint working to form the agreed budget for the school.

What revised role does the Governing Body take?

Each school would form a Local Advisory Board (LAB) that helps the Trust and the school fulfil its objectives. There is a detailed Scheme of Delegation that sets out the roles and responsibilities of the Local Advisory Board. Essentially, the LAB is responsible for supporting the school in achieving the best outcomes for its pupils.

What support would the school benefit from by joining the Trust?

We have a directory of expertise to support our schools alongside a Director of School Improvement and School Improvement Partner. Being a Gloucestershire based multi-academy trust, we will always be within 45 minutes of all our schools enabling us to provide speedy support should it ever be needed. There are also career opportunities across all our schools and extensive CPD programmes.

How does funding work being part of the Trust?

The Trust uses the method of apportioning central support costs; this covers building maintenance, health and safety compliance, HR and Finance and full IT support. The average apportionment for each school is around 7.5% top-sliced from the General Annual Grant. This compares favourably with other trusts and the Local Authority model of between 8% - 12%. The annual budget for the school is agreed with the Headteacher / LAB and the Trust.

How could pupils benefit from being part of the Trust?

We put pupils at the heart of all we do offering an aspirational approach to their learning and development. With special and mainstream schools in our Trust we believe we can offer a symbiotic relationship between schools to ensure all pupils receive the learning and support they need.

Frequently Asked Questions cont.

How do the Trust's values and ethos align with the schools?

We make sure that the schools are properly supported and funded within the boundaries of Government funding. We ensure that our Trust is well governed by our Trustees and is a safe place to learn and a secure place to work. This leaves the Headteacher and their teams to focus on education of their pupils and development of their staff.

What are the Trust's growth plans for the next five years?

We want to grow our Trust prudently with the right schools and partners. The Trust does not wish to grow exponentially, but rather focus on schools in our geographic region that would benefit from support from our existing schools and we can learn from them also.

How will the school retain its identity and community links?

We actively encourage each school to retain and nurture its links with the community it serves. We do not seek to change the school's well forged links and identity. The approach is that the Trust will support and enhance its connections with the school.

Ensuring the best outcomes for pupils in education, care and life opportunities

What are the next steps if you wish to explore joining the Trust?

We would encourage you to discuss this document in detail with your governors. You can meet any of our Trustees at any time and, if you wish to proceed, we would agree a Letter of Understanding which is a non-legally binding letter to actively pursue your school joining the Trust. This would include due diligence on both parties.

Becoming a SAND school



If you share our enthusiasm and commitment to work together to make a positive difference to all our learners, staff and our communities, we would very much like to talk to you.

Our ambition for the Trust is one of sustainable growth whilst ensuring all our schools provide a supportive and inclusive environment that challenges and enables them, their staff and their pupils to be the best they can be.

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