



**DISCUSSION PAPER FOR
MAINTAINED SCHOOLS**

Thinking about becoming an academy?

Reasons to consider Ebor Academy Trust

In the words of our headteachers and governors:

- This is a Trust that invests in its people and develops talent, it grows leaders.
- It has quality specialists who are current practitioners and practice is shared across the Trust. There are opportunities for all, we feel valued.
- Ebor is about forward thinking, innovative, creative solutions, about collaborative partnerships and shared responsibility. We're not competitors – we are a support network, a genuine family of schools that want to help each other.
- The Trust values the diversity of its schools, and celebrates their uniqueness. Wider links are part of Ebor's cultural capital.
- Ebor has high aspirations for its pupils, it has morals and a heart. It is driven by education and not business or profit.

Understand the benefits of being part of the family



A strong and effective multi academy trust is able to support more schools, develop great teachers and can let school leaders to focus

on what really matters – teaching, learning and brilliant education.

I encourage you to read the words below of these headteachers in Ebor who, like me, have been where you are today. They are the best people to talk to about academisation.

We are all glad we made the change and can see the benefits in our school communities.

This brochure gives some insight but we welcome a no-obligation meeting to discuss further. I look forward to hearing from you.

– Gail Brown, Chief Executive and Executive Headteacher, Ebor Academy Trust



What our headteachers say about their experiences...

Keeping individuality whilst sharing Ebor's values and beliefs

Deciding to join a multi academy trust was an easy decision – but working out which one proved more of a challenge. Our children and staff deserved to be part of a strong MAT that was primary driven and had a proven track record of school improvement. And as a headteacher, I wanted to have a genuine feel for life as part of the MAT before I supported the decision to convert.

It took a good six months to be really sure which one was right for us. I attended heads' meetings, our staff, governors and I visited schools already involved and found out what they considered to be the strengths and challenges of working as part of the trust.

Ebor stood out from the onset with core values strongly aligned with our own. Ebor has a strong school to school support team who were enthusiastic and driven and comprised teachers of all ages and stages in their career. It was easy to see where we could both benefit and support this sharing of best practice.

The hub model means that there are local schools with whom

a strong relationship can be developed. Sharing of specialist teachers, resources and facilities is a particular strength and the hubs make this much more time effective. We have really benefited from sharing forest school sessions on another Ebor school site and offering cook school sessions on a reciprocal arrangement.

A problem shared is a problem halved and that is the real benefit of being part of a good MAT. Specialist support and guidance can be readily accessed from the central services team, whether it's marketing materials to raise pupil numbers, premises issues, financial support and budgeting advice or the minefield that is Health and Safety – there is always someone there to help.

But the real advantage of being a part of Ebor is that you are part of a group of schools with shared values and beliefs whilst being able to retain your own school's individuality.

Donna Bedford, headteacher, Staynor Hall Community Primary Academy (head at Tadcaster on joining Ebor)

Not such a giant leap after all

Having worked closely with Ebor on school improvement work and being very impressed by their effectiveness, we took the giant leap of moving to become an academy within Ebor Academy Trust.

All stakeholders were consulted and every question asked and answered. When the day of conversion came, the "huge leap" did not happen as life carried on as normal!

What we found was that support was more immediate, collaboration was actively encouraged and effective leadership and vision came from the centre.

Headteacher meetings were like none I had been to before, a 'done with' rather than a 'done to' model. It is great to work closely with like-minded colleagues and this filters through to all our staff who have benefited from increased continuous professional development.

Creativity has been encouraged by the trust allowing us to fulfil our vision of 'living life in all its fullness'. We were worried about being isolated as schools made their moves towards joining different multi academy trusts. We felt that Ebor's values aligned the most with us and I believe that we have benefited hugely from being in the trust.

Justin Reeve, headteacher, Tockwith Church of England Primary Academy



A central support team that's with you all the way

We have a comprehensive central support team that works with our schools to share the burden of non-education matters.

It's an organised team to complement the very busy office functions that exist in every school.

We have in-house experts in finance,

HR, estates, health and safety, risk management, compliance, IT, staff training, apprenticeships, marketing and communications to help schools and we work with them – and you – to make the best use of limited resources.

This means you're not on your own. There's always someone who can

help, someone to turn to when the unexpected happens.

We work alongside other multi academy trusts on larger procurement projects, so as to get even more value for money. The more we can save on essential services means more money for frontline teaching and learning.



'Expectation of excellence'

We decided to join Ebor because we wanted to be part of a MAT that allowed individuality and freedom.

We didn't want to join a large academy chain that might want to impose a uniform or follow a particular scheme of work.

The governors and staff were impressed with Ebor's determination to put children at the centre of all decision making. The term 'We are only as strong as our weakest member' was often used by the CEO during initial presentations and it remains true that all academies within the trust help and support others to ensure that everybody is at a high standard.

There is so much expertise within Ebor and it is amazing to share in this by working together, sharing resources and regularly getting together to talk about plans and ideas.

Being part of a Ebor allows staff to develop professionally, move up to leadership roles and develop their skills in a safe and supportive environment.

Children have benefitted from extra resources, staff are extremely well trained and there is an expectation of excellence across the trust.

**Jo Sawyer, headteacher,
Park Grove Primary Academy**

Development opportunities for staff



Having the central support team's expertise to draw upon is so helpful. If you need support, there's a wide range on offer and you're never on your own with Ebor Academy Trust.

School improvement is a journey you take with others alongside you. Secure relationships with partner schools are built and they help you to confirm you're on the right path as you move forwards together. The collaboration is transparent, everyone is eager

to develop others and success is always shared so we all feel part of the family of schools.

Development opportunities for staff ensures growth and retention and helps with recruitment. Inspirational teachers and leaders of the future are encouraged, with job opportunities cropping up at other schools within the trust allowing talent to be retained within Ebor whilst ambition is realised. I'm also so pleased that brilliant classroom practice is recognised.

**Debbie Cousins, headteacher,
Hob Moor Community Primary Academy**



After being in teaching for over 20 years, all of which under local authority control, I confess I had some concerns

about moving to work at an academy trust. Would my pay and conditions and pension be of the same standard? Would I have control over the way I ran my school? How does the finance work?

As I now approach almost five months as a headteacher of two small village schools within Ebor Academy Trust, I can honestly say that these fears were completely unwarranted. This is, of course, a big relief!

I am new to headship and the support and genuine care for my own development and wellbeing has been fantastic. Rather than dictating to my schools, as some think may happen, there is a team of professionals (safeguarding, HR, finance, health and safety, training and so on) supporting me and my team to provide the best opportunities for our children.

Starting at the schools, who have been a part of Ebor Academy Trust for several years, I found them to be well-resourced and in good financial positions (therefore exploding the myth at Ebor that money is taken out of schools).

The culture within this trust is about promoting excellence and as a family of schools, this is felt at every level. As part of Ebor, I have a team behind me who enable me to focus on providing the best education for our children and who take the time to get to know the opportunities and challenges of any given school's situation.

I would certainly recommend becoming part of Ebor Academy Trust. It does not feel like an academy chain but an amazing network of support and opportunity.

Jenny Marsden, headteacher, Riston Church of England Primary Academy and Sigglesworth Church of England Primary Academy

Where Ebor is different from other trusts...

Primary-led multi-academy trust – incorporating community schools as well as Church of England schools – with no lead school

Comprehensive career opportunities for staff – we can retain and reward talented staff by offering opportunities at other schools

Excellent in-house CPD, including offering highest Ofsted rated apprenticeships and a key partnership with our regional training school.

Enriched curriculum opportunities for our children, allowing smaller schools access to specialist teaching.

Thorough knowledge of SEND through our special primary school.

Safeguarding and wellbeing experts – in the pandemic, our work for vulnerable children was highlighted in Parliament as an example of best practice.

Very much at the heart of our communities. Most of our staff grew up and live across the Ebor patch. This gives us a real, ingrained understanding of our area, its issues and its people.

Mythbusters

Much is said about multi-academy trusts but unfortunately, sometimes it's incorrect. Here are the facts when it comes to Ebor...

- **Multi-academy trusts (MATs) are not accountable**

Not so - in fact we are held to account to a much higher standard than maintained schools by the Educational and Skills Funding Agency, Ofsted and regional schools commissioners.

- **The land the school sits on will be sold off for housing**

That's incorrect. The land is still ultimately owned by the local authority or Diocese. It is only leased to the trust.

- **All schools will be clones of each other**

No - we celebrate and promote the differences and diversity of our schools.

- **MATs are only interested in data not children**

Not so. Ebor puts the best interests of its children at the heart of everything we do.

- **The school will no longer have a headteacher**

Yes it will!

- **Only failing schools join MATs**

This is definitely not the case.

- **Staff will lose their pensions or they will be reduced**

No - all pensions remain with the same pensions provider, with the same arrangements that were in place before conversion.

- **After TUPE runs out, the academy trust will change terms and conditions**

No. As with all organisations, any proposed changes post-TUPE are carried out adhering to consultation practices.

- **Maternity will not be treated in the same way as pre-academisation**

Maternity, as with all other terms and conditions of employment, remains protected when staff join the trust. Ebor honours the national school teachers' pay and conditions and the national joint council salary scale for support staff.

- **Staff will be made to go and work in other schools, whether they like it or not**

Not so - vacancies are advertised internally so there are more opportunities but people only move if they want to.

- **Uniform will be imposed**

Uniforms are a matter for the local governing body to decide, not the trust.

- **The governors will no longer have any say in the leadership of the school**

Not so. Governors will continue to play a vital role in the running of the school.

- **Everybody will have to follow the same planning in all schools**

While there are common protocols - put together and refined by heads themselves - teaching and learning and an individual curriculum that's right for the community remains the prerogative of the head and senior leadership team.

- **Academies have more money**

Not true (sadly!) We are funded the same as maintained schools. But we will help you become more financially efficient, leveraging our economies of scale and increasing the amount of money available to you, to spend on front line teaching and learning.



Don't just take our word for it - heads, senior leaders and governors are welcome to visit our schools to see for themselves.

Next steps

If you would like to know more, for a no-obligation meeting to discuss, email interested@ebor.academy and we'll be in touch.

Find out more at:
www.ebor.academy