



Welcome to

# Northumberland Church of England Academy Trust

“Enabling everyone in our communities to let their light shine.”

[Matthew 5:16]



## CEO's Welcome

**Alan Hardie**  
CEO

Northumberland Church of England Academy Trust is a Church of England-led multi-academy trust (MAT) with the needs and aspirations of our pupils firmly at the centre of everything we do.

From humble beginnings, our Trust has grown steadily year-on-year and now supports the education of almost 3,000 children and young people aged 2-19 across Northumberland.

As our name suggests, our Trust has its roots in the Anglican Church, however, as we have a non-denominational special school within the Trust, we are legally a 'mixed MAT'. We welcome both Church of England and non-denominational schools who share our high aspirations for pupils and our Trust vision of enabling everyone in our communities to 'let their light shine'.

We understand that choosing to join an Academy Trust can be a huge decision for a Headteacher and Governing Body to make. Every school is unique, which is why it is so important to choose a Trust which matches your own vision and values and can facilitate your ambitions for the future.

At NCEAT, we pride ourselves on our approach to welcoming new academies into the Trust – one size definitely does not fit all, which is why we like to take time to meet with school leaders and staff to gain a better understanding of what makes your school and local community 'tick' so we can celebrate and elevate your individuality.

Our LIGHT values (Love, Inclusivity, Goodness, Hope and Truth) underpin all aspects of our work and we aim to be a great employer, allowing our staff to thrive and enjoy their roles with a strong focus on CPD, health and wellbeing.

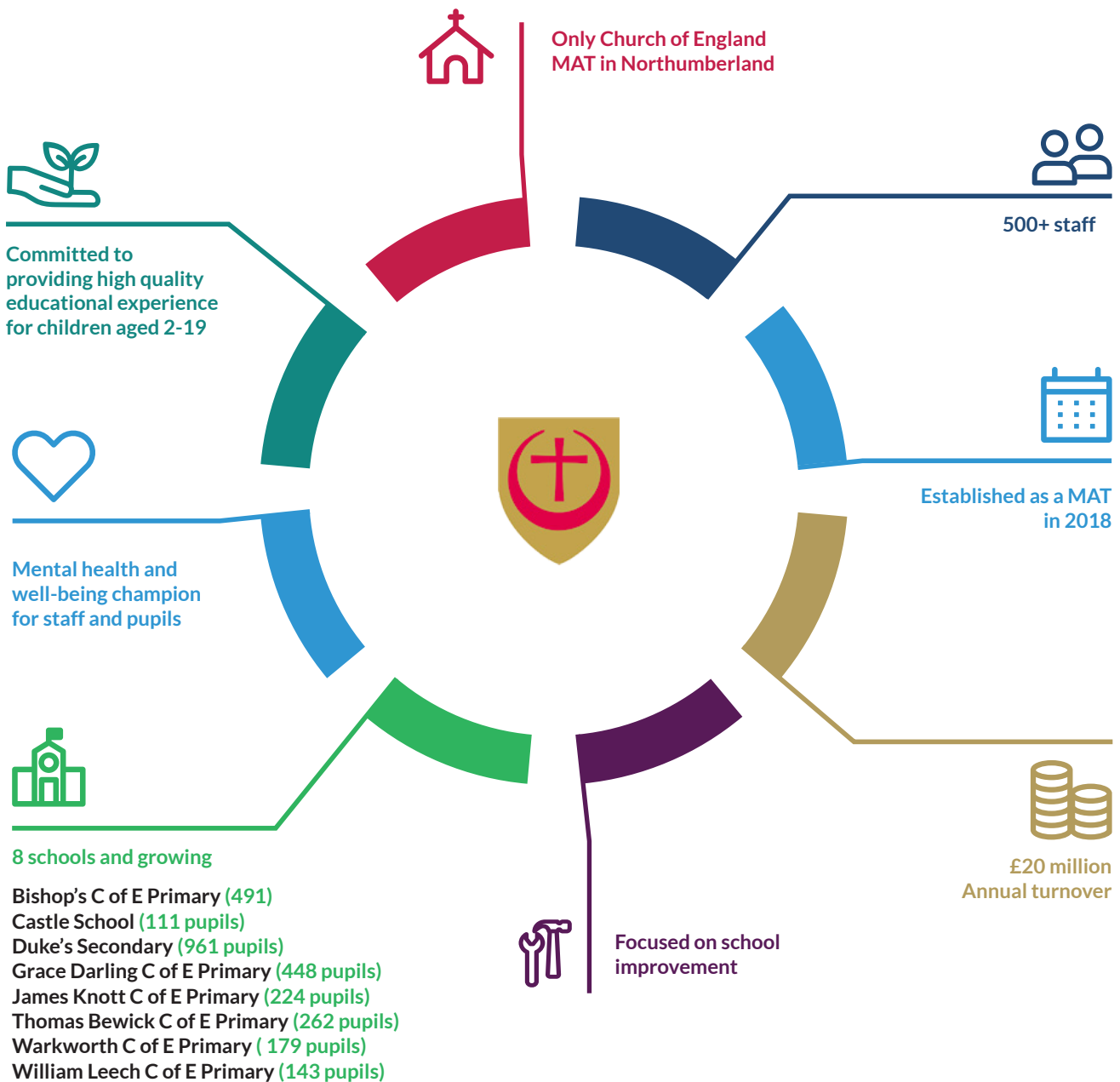
As a Trust we're not focused on being the biggest, just the best we can be. Earned autonomy is our model for leadership and we strive to have great, cost-effective support services to allow our school leaders to focus on what really matters: teaching and learning.

If this is what you are seeking in a Trust, then we would love to speak to you. There will be no hard sell and a key part of all initial conversations will be around what your school will bring to the Trust as much as what we may be able to give you. I look forward to hearing from you.

# Who we are

Northumberland Church of England Academy Trust (NCEAT) is a Church of England-led multi-academy trust based in Northumberland. Comprising 8 schools spanning primary, secondary, further education and special educational needs, the Trust aims to provide an inclusive and diverse learning environment, underpinned by Christian values, where students are enabled and encouraged to 'let their light shine' [Matthew 5:16].

## NCEAT at a glance



# Our vision and values

At NCEAT Trust, we believe in an education system that prepares students for success.

Our ultimate goal is to develop well-rounded, highly capable individuals who, with the support of our talented teaching and support staff, can complete their learning journey with the skills and confidence that they need to take their next steps into higher education or employment.

To us, school is about more than what you learn in a classroom, it's about developing skills for life in a forward-thinking environment which promotes a culture of aspiration and success, alongside inclusion and a sense of social responsibility.

The Trust's Christian ethos, captured through our 'LIGHT' values, is fundamental to all aspects of school life. Across the Trust, our staff and pupils are valued equally and included; all respected, nurtured, encouraged and enabled to achieve fullness of life



## Love

We care for each other and we help others do well. We have a concern for justice and for the vulnerable, especially those in need.

[Mark 12:31, John 3:16 13:24-35, Romans 12:10, 1 Corinthians 13, 1 John 4:11]



## Inclusivity

We are an open, welcoming and inclusive community that celebrates the worth of each person, and when necessary offers forgiveness and reconciliation too.

[Matthew 6:12, Ephesians 4:2, Ephesians 4:32]



## Goodness

We work hard and always seek to do what is right. We encourage one another to treat others as we would like to be treated, to do good and to serve others.

[Luke 6:31, Galatians 5:22, Hebrews 10:24, 2 Peter 1:5]



## Hope

We aspire to be the best we can be. We learn from our mistakes and try again with determination.

[Psalm 25:21, Psalm 31:24, Psalm 33:18, Romans 15:4, Colossians]



## Truth

We tell the truth and are true to our word. We take responsibility for what we think, say and do. We encourage integrity and respect for authority.

[Proverbs 12:17, Mark 12:14, John 1:17, John 8:22, John 14:6]

## We fulfil our vision and values by:



### Educating for wisdom, knowledge and skills.

We will deliver a knowledge-rich, broad and balanced curriculum with quality teaching and focus on employability skills for lifelong success.



### Acting with integrity.

We will be true to our vision and values, using commitment and endurance to focus on continuous improvement and long term sustainability.



### Working with hope and aspiration.

We will improve life chances, removing barriers and creating opportunities for personal development that may otherwise be out of reach.



### Creating a deeply Christian, inclusive, nurturing and aspirational culture.

We will enable pupils and staff to enjoy "life in all its fullness". [John 10:10]



### Investing in our people.

Our staff are our most vital resource and we aim to be recognised as an excellent employer, which values and develops its staff.



### Serving our communities.

Our thriving schools will be at the heart of their communities. We will create positive relationships with our 'neighbours', living well together and collaborating for the greater good.



### Developing an inclusive learning community.

We will set clear expectations for good behaviour and respect towards others so all pupils can learn with dignity.

# Why join a MAT?

Joining a multi-academy trust is a huge decision and it's important to find the right fit for your school.

At NCEAT, we believe in the power of 'strength in numbers' and our school leaders enjoy the security that comes with being part of a MAT and the support they receive from our

Central Services teams, which gives them the freedom to focus on what really matters - the children.

In becoming a part of our Trust, your school would receive access to a number of support functions including:

## IT Support

Our IT team is responsible for the implementation and maintenance of a vast array of software and hardware throughout the Trust. Providing day-to-day support for both staff and students, the team looks after the entire network from our head office in Ashington and is instrumental in initiating new schools into the NCEAT family.

## HR

The central HR team is dedicated to providing high-quality information and advice. While schools retain responsibility for some elements, such as staff inductions and managing staff absence, the central HR function oversees recruitment, staff training, policy creation and performance management and much more.

## Safeguarding

Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) and deputies at each of our schools, supported centrally by our retained third party specialist, Clennell's Education Solutions, ensure that NCEAT is a happy, inclusive and safe place for children to achieve the best possible outcomes.

## Finance

Committed to providing high quality financial management, advice and information, the finance team ensures that all of the accounting records are kept accurate and up to date, financial transactions are processed correctly and that our schools comply with the Financial Regulations of the MAT, as well as the Academies Financial Handbook and Company and Charity Law.

## Marketing

Responsible for publicising the positive work undertaken by the Trust and its schools to our network of parents, staff and the wider community, the central Marketing team supports schools with all aspects of internal and external communications; including website management, content creation, media relations and much more.

## Payroll and Pensions

At NCEAT we understand the difference that having an effective payroll system in place can make to your staff and your organisation, which is why we have an in-house Payroll and Pensions specialist nested between our Finance and HR provision, to provide our schools with the care and attention employees' pay deserves.

## Chaplaincy

At the heart of our Trust, our core purpose is to enable 'everyone in our communities to let their light shine' [Matthew 5:16]. Our in-house Trust Chaplain is available across all of our schools to help support all of our pupils and staff to fulfil their God-given potential.

## Estates Management

Our in-house Facilities and Estates team works tirelessly to ensure that our schools are well maintained and fit for purpose as educational institutions, but also as places of work and spaces for local community groups to use for sporting and other out-of-hours activities.

## Governance

Our central governance department plays a vital role in the management of our Trust boards and Local Governing Bodies, ensuring that our schools and the Trust as a whole remain well governed and that senior leaders are held accountable in line with our Scheme of Delegation.

## School Improvement Support

While our Christian ethos and LIGHT values remain at the core of our work, we understand that each school has its own unique culture and place within its local community. By enabling Principals and Headteachers to suggest and lead on improvement projects for their own schools with support from the Trust, we hope to create a self-driven culture of excellence which allows schools to maintain their sense of individuality while reaping the rewards of being a part of 'something bigger'.

# Case study: NCEA Warkworth C of E Primary School

Nestled in the beautiful Northumbrian village of Warkworth, Warkworth C of E Primary School is one of the most recent additions to Northumberland Church of England Academy Trust (NCEAT).

A small school with big ambitions, Warkworth Primary transitioned into the county's two-tier school system in 2017 to extend its offer to pupils up to age 11.

Passionate about its role in the community and with its Christian vision and values firmly at the heart of its curriculum, the school sought to join an Academy Trust to support its ambition to expand.

"We welcome all families in our community who wish for their child to go to a school with Christian values at its core, however, NCEA Warkworth Primary is the only Church of England primary school in the local area, so demand often outstrips supply," explained Headteacher, Laura Ritson.

"Joining an Academy Trust is something that we had considered to enable us to meet growing demand, however

we wanted to make sure that the Trust we chose was going to be the right fit for our community-driven school.

"We consulted with the Joint Education Team at The Dioceses of Durham and Newcastle, who put us in touch with a number of multi-academy trusts operating locally who shared our vision and values.

"After meeting with Alan and other members of the team from NCEAT, we knew that the Trust was going to be the best fit for Warkworth Primary. The Trust's Church values matched our own and we loved how these were embedded into school life.

"We also liked the idea that we could join the Trust while maintaining our sense of independence - we didn't have to change our school logo or any of our fundamental values, instead, we were encouraged to retain our individuality and to keep doing what we were already doing, just with the added knowledge that we were being supported by an Academy Trust."



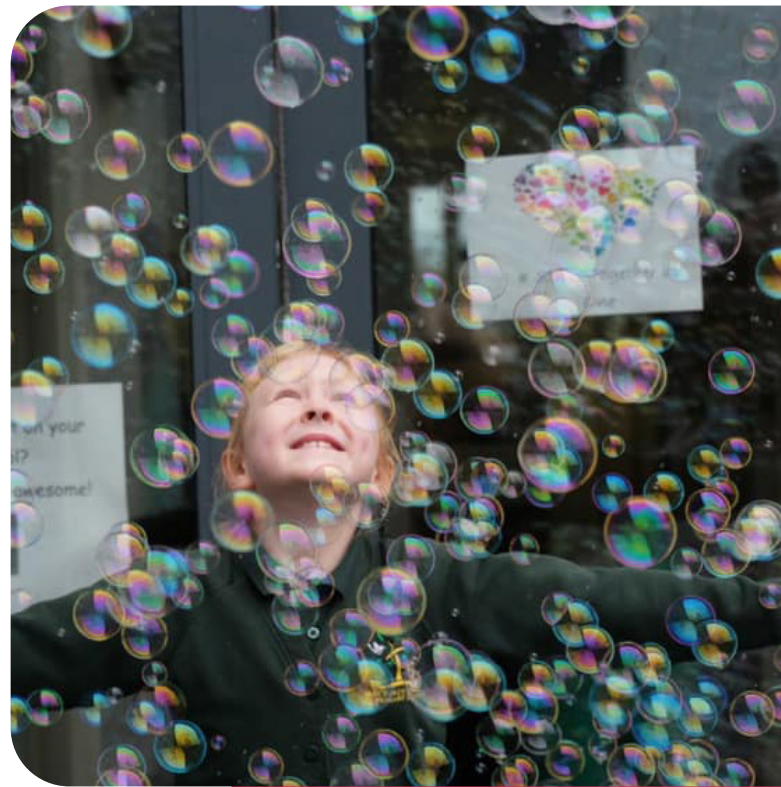
Alan Hardie | Chief Executive at NCEAT, commented:

*"We were delighted to welcome Warkworth C of E Primary School into the NCEA Trust.*

*"The school shares many of our ideals about the importance of providing an all-round educational experience for children which captures not only academic learning, but also the teaching of softer skills, such as how to communicate effectively - which in turn supports their personal development and overall mental health and wellbeing."*

*"Already, Warkworth Primary is seeing its ambitions to grow come to fruition as we have supported them to fund a new modular building on the school premises which will create additional space for its early years and reception classes."*

To find out more about NCEA Warkworth C of E Primary School, visit [www.warkworth.ncea.org.uk](http://www.warkworth.ncea.org.uk).



# Trust Partnerships

Choosing to convert to an academy, or selecting an academy trust to work with is a significant decision for any school. While the opportunity to work with a network of like-minded schools is exciting, we understand that such a major change requires careful consideration. In recognition of this, we offer schools the opportunity to join us on a temporary basis through a trust partnership.

## What is a Trust Partnership?

Trust partnerships are a time-limited arrangement which allow schools and trusts to come together in mutually beneficial partnerships. They do not deliver the full benefits of formally joining a multi-academy trust, but provide a way for a school and a trust to work together and test whether a formal partnership will benefit both parties.

For NCEAT, the key is ensuring that the distinctive ethos of the school is compatible with the Trust so that we share similar values, which gives us the basis for a strong and sustainable partnership.

Partnerships can allow strong schools and trusts to explore the benefits of collaborating (for instance, sharing expertise through Headteachers and subject leads). Trust partnerships can also be used as a powerful school improvement tool, allowing vulnerable schools to access support from the networks and services provided by a strong trust.

## How does a Trust Partnership work?

Trust partnership with NCEAT is governed through formal documents, where both parties agree terms and conditions to ensure the success of the partnership. The partnership is time-limited, usually 12 months and it is not intended to be a long-term solution, or a replacement for conversion. However, it does give both school and trust an extended period to explore whether the school joining NCEAT would be beneficial to both parties.

Each trust partnership agreement is bespoke and allows the school to buy into a menu of support from NCEAT, so your school can benefit from leadership support and experience the value of belonging to a trust. This includes access to school improvement services, CPD opportunities, our Headteacher network and other central services provided by NCEAT.

## Financing a Trust Partnership & next steps

If a school is eligible for the DfE Trust and School Improvement Offer, funding may be provided to support a partnership arrangement, subject to DfE approval.

Where costs are involved and external funding is not available, NCEAT provide services 'at cost'. However, partner schools are not charged for many of the benefits of a trust partnership. The scope of services available and any costs are set out in the partnership agreement.

During the partnership, the governing body of the school gives due consideration to academisation and joining NCEAT, through formal consultation where required.

At NCEAT, we feel school visits are particularly valuable and would be delighted to welcome visits to any of our schools to talk to members of staff or those in governance about life in a multi academy trust. Our CEO would also be delighted to visit your school to discuss the possibility of a trust partnership or membership of NCEAT.





# NCEAT School Improvement Offer

This model applies to existing NCEAT schools and trust partner schools but is also available to others schools who request school improvement support from NCEAT.

## Step 1 - Evaluation of needs

Identification of the specific improvement challenges in each school and what actions are required to improve standards. This is informed by self-evaluation, data, development plans and school visits.

## Step 3 - Delivery of specific support

Delivery of the agreed support by the NCEAT school improvement team, central services and additional partners based on the package agreed and the needs of the school.

## Step 2 - Identification of specific support

Identification of the specific actions which are required to secure school improvement, who will deliver this, time scales involved, milestones and success criteria. The level of support provided is determined by the evaluation of needs.

## Step 4 - Evaluation of impact

Evaluation of the impact of the support using agreed success criteria and the impact triangulated through external reviews (SIP, Diocese JET, etc.) as well internally through leadership and governance quality assurance processes.

### Organisational effectiveness

- Appraisal.
- Induction.
- Leadership Development.
- Deployment of TAs.
- Cost effectiveness / ICFP.
- Succession planning.
- Networking opportunities.
- Specialist teams & interventions e.g. SALT & THRIVE.
- Alignment with development priorities.
- Building strong teams.
- Staffing models.

### Securing high quality teaching and learning

- Extensive and bespoke CPD offer.
- Support for whole school strategic improvements e.g. literacy, numeracy, EYFS, SEND.
- Specialist curriculum planning support.
- Support and challenge for any areas of under performance.
- Staff coaching.

### Accurate data and assessment information

- Support with assessment systems.
- Consistent approach & timeframe.
- Develop KPIs for tracking and to demonstrate improvement impact.
- Support SLT with analysis.
- Benchmark against national comparators.
- Informs strategic priorities.
- Moderation support.

### School self-evaluation quality framework

- Development planning.
- Continuous improvement / kaizen.
- Accurate picture of school vulnerabilities.
- Highlight and share good practice.
- Root cause analysis.
- External reviews.
- Agreed non-negotiables.
- Targeted support.

# Joining the Trust

Becoming a part of the NCEA Trust family of schools couldn't be easier!

1

## Step 1

Your school's Headteacher and Governing Body have decided to investigate converting to an academy and becoming part of Northumberland Church of England Academy Trust (NCEAT), please contact our CEO for an informal discussion. Should you then wish to proceed more formally, you should contact the Regional Schools Commissioner's office to discuss your plans before starting your application. Church of England Schools will also need to speak to the Diocesan Director of Education.

3

## Step 3

Your Governing Body meet to consider the outcome of the stakeholder consultation and resolves to convert to an academy with NCEAT. For voluntary aided (VA) schools, conditional consent from the Diocese will be required at this stage. The first part of the due diligence process begins.

2

## Step 2

Your Governing Body resolves to consult on becoming an academy within NCEAT and starts its consultation with key stakeholders. We will support your school through this process.

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## Step 4

The Headteacher needs to complete the DfE online application form. The following documents will need to be uploaded:

- A resolution passed by the school's governing body
- A letter from NCEAT to say that we welcome your application
- A letter of consent from the Diocesan Board of Education – if you are a Church school
- A letter of consent from the foundation trust – if you are a foundation school

The Department for Education (DfE) will then set a date for the application to be considered by the Regional Schools Commissioner's (RSC) Advisory Board.



*"The government's vision is for every school to be part of a family of schools in strong academy trusts".*

*Department for Education, Building Strong Academy Trusts, 2021.*



*“The Newcastle Diocesan Education Board are committed to supporting schools to join strong growing Trusts”... “Without belonging to an established and effective Trust, any Church School’s future is, sadly, potentially at risk.”*

*Diocesan Vision for Education Strategy Paper, January 2022.*

5

## Step 5

The RSC Advisory Board reviews the application and if successful, approves your school’s proposal to convert to an academy within NCEAT and grants an Academy Order. Legal support for this process is arranged by NCEAT.

7

## Step 7

NCEAT, the Local Authority and the Governing Body of your school enter into the Commercial Transfer Agreement and land documentation.

9

## Step 9

Pre-opening actions: We work with your school to ensure that enhanced DBS checks are up-to-date. We work with your school to ensure that financial systems and insurance are in place.

6

## Step 6

The full due diligence process gets formally underway and the TUPE consultation process commences. Depending whether your school is currently local authority maintained or voluntary aided by a foundation or trust will determine who will lead on this process. NCEAT will support your school through this process.

8

## Step 8

NCEAT and the Secretary of State sign the Supplemental Funding Agreement for your school.

10

## Step 10

Your school opens as an academy within NCEAT.



## Northumberland Church of England Academy Trust

**NCEA Trust**  
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If you are looking for more information or become part  
of the trust, **please don't hesitate to get in touch.**

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