

Small Schools Strategy

Vision: An Daras Multi Academy Trust aims to retain small schools as vital community hubs and ensure they thrive as centres of educational excellence.

Goals:

1. **Raise academic, social, and emotional outcomes for children.**
2. **Ensure financial viability and sustainability, providing strong value for money.**

Importance of Small Schools:

- Serve as important community centres for families.
- Provide high-quality educational provisions for children.
- Act as assets to communities, contributing to innovation, research, social services, sustainability, wellbeing, health, and welfare.
- Encourage younger families to stay or move into communities, fostering social and economic sustainability.

Challenges Faced by Small Schools:

- Financial instability.
- Unpredictable pupil numbers.
- High staffing costs relative to enrolment.
- Limited funding for staff professional development (CPD) and resources.
- Difficulties in recruiting and retaining high-quality staff.
- Increased workload due to limited staff capacity.

Support Offered by An Daras Trust:

- Access to more support and services than standalone entities.
- Ensuring financial sustainability.
- Offering professional development and networking opportunities for staff.
- Opportunities to develop new leaders.
- Trust systems in place to reduce teacher workload.

Central Trust Team:

- **Directors of Learning:** Focus on supporting small schools.
- **OFSTED Inspector:** Guides school improvement.

- **Curriculum Officer:** Offers expert curriculum support.
- **Lead Trust SENDCo** – Support for school SENCOs and CPD.
- **Director of Learning:** Leads CPD and professional learning groups.
- **Trained Instructional Coaches:** Aid staff development.

School Improvement Team Support:

- Bespoke support to individual schools.
- Safeguarding oversight.
- Development and review of Action Improvement Plans (AIP) and Self-Evaluation Frameworks (SEF).
- Preparation for Ofsted and SIAMs inspections.
- Teaching and learning reviews.
- Data analysis and identifying next steps.

Central Team Expertise:

- **Chief Financial Officer (CFO):** Finance support.
- **Human Resources (HR):** Legal assistance.
- **Data Protection Support:** GDPR compliance.
- **Trust Property Consultant:** Property advice and compliance.

Funding Contribution:

- Each school contributes up to 6% of their General Annual Grant (GAG) funding to access these services, ensuring comprehensive support for all schools.

Engagement with Prospective Schools:

- Discussions about operational and organisational arrangements to enhance sustainability.
- Potential partnerships with existing Trust schools.
- Shared staffing and leadership models.
- Financial sustainability assessments
- Curriculum alignment and shared expertise among schools.

Commitment:

An Daras Trust is dedicated to maintaining the unique ethos and identity of each school while providing the necessary support to ensure their success. We are committed to innovative and collaborative approaches that maximise educational benefits for children and secure financial sustainability for our small schools.