

Teaching Schools Leicestershire

Frequently Asked Questions

What are teaching schools?

Teaching schools are 'lead' schools within an alliance of schools and partners whose role is to work with others to provide high-quality training and support for school improvement in their local area. Their work is focused on 6 key areas through which their success is monitored and evaluated. These are:

- 1 delivering school-led initial teacher training (ITT), including Schools Direct
- 2 providing tailored continuing professional development to staff across their alliances
- 3 supporting other schools, usually working with a school or academy in challenging circumstances to bring about improvement
- 4 identifying and developing future leaders
- 5 recruiting and managing specialist leaders of education: outstanding middle and senior leaders who develop leaders in other schools
- 6 building on existing research and sharing new research and development

More information about teaching schools can be found at the following links:

Department for Education - <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/teaching-schools-and-system-leadership-how-you-can-get-involved>

Teaching Schools Council - <http://tscouncil.org.uk>

East Midlands Teaching School Alliance - <http://www.emtsa.org.uk>

Most teaching schools operate with subscriptions and a memorandum of understanding to which schools sign up. There is a management/committee structure with representation from schools and partners within the alliance. This allows the teaching school to plan a range of professional development activity to support teachers and leaders at all stages of their career. Teaching schools within a region can be licensed to deliver national leadership programmes and can act as an Appropriate Body for NQTs.

In Leicestershire, the teaching school alliances also support the local authority's school improvement arrangements. They provide targeted school support to local authority identified schools and support some of the collaborative projects that are commissioned through Leicestershire Education Excellence Partnership.

Where are the teaching schools in Leicestershire?

There are six teaching schools in Leicestershire. All have formed alliances so that other schools can join and participate in the six key areas of teaching school work. The teaching schools and their contact details are listed in Appendix A. Each teaching school alliance website has the most up to date information. The teaching schools are not bound by county borders and schools can ask to join whichever teaching school best meets their needs, character and ethos.

How do the teaching schools in Leicestershire work together?

The teaching schools in Leicestershire work closely together in a number of ways, whilst maintaining their own distinct identity. All belong to the Teaching Schools Council and are bound by the protocols and processes of that body. All six teaching schools are part of the East Midlands Teaching School Alliance and are represented in that group by named leaders who attend on behalf of all the teaching schools in Leicestershire. This group plans strategically across the region to develop best practice and improve outcomes in priority areas. The six leads and the directors of teaching schools meet regularly to discuss common issues and ensure that information is shared so that schools are not bombarded with different information or confusing messages coming from different sources.

How are teaching schools different from multi-academy trusts (MAT)?

Importantly, teaching school alliances are not set up to be multi-academy trusts, although some may have a lead role in a MAT. Belonging to a teaching school alliance does not require a change in governance or the same 'due diligence' approach that schools take when converting to an academy or becoming part of a MAT. Lead teaching schools have a responsibility to deliver support to schools within the alliance but are not accountable for performance in the same way as a multi-academy trust. Where a school is underperforming, Teaching Schools are not expected to become a sponsor but may be approached if they are a MAT.

If I'm joining a MAT, do I still need to be part of a teaching school alliance?

In short, no, but both offer different support and are not mutually exclusive. It can greatly benefit a school to be part of both. A teaching school alliance may offer a range of training and expertise that is either not available through the multi-academy trust, or complements the work of the trust. The wide ranging brief of teaching schools, their performance measures, and both the regional and national networks, mean that they are well placed to support schools and offer opportunities for professional development for aspiring leaders and teachers. As more MATs are emerging, many are remaining as members of a teaching school alliance.

Why should my school join a teaching school alliance?

Schools are not forced to join a teaching school alliance. However, as a group of schools within Leicestershire teaching school alliances offer a unique platform for support and development within the school system. With the focus on school improvement, research and professional development and strategic partners across the education system, they offer a secure network for any school seeking to work collaboratively, whatever its designation.

What are the expectations of me if I join a teaching school alliance?

The success of a teaching school alliance is dependent on the **reciprocal relationship** of the schools within. On the basis that all schools have something to contribute to the learning community, your school will identify expertise and knowledge that can be shared as well as needs which will be supported by others within the alliance. As teaching school alliances evolve the dynamics of the partnership will develop and deepen.

If I'm an outstanding school, why should I join a teaching school alliance?

It is vital that schools, whatever their status and success, are able to work together to improve outcomes for children and young people. Schools that have been judged to be outstanding are in a strong position to contribute to the programme of professional development that each teaching school alliance plans. It is widely acknowledged that when teachers work together in a coaching relationship for example, the coach benefits as much as the coached. As an outstanding school being inspected, a key area of leadership and management is the way in which leaders build strong partnerships and collaborate with others.

Do I need to join the teaching school alliance that is nearest to me?

It is important to look at the range of opportunities that each teaching school alliance offers and choose the one that best fits your school's needs and ethos. Many schools do opt for a local teaching school as this often fits with existing collaborative arrangements and a number of the alliances evolved from local groups.

Will teaching schools exist in the future?

It would be foolish to try and predict any future government policy so it is difficult to answer this question. What we do know is that teaching school alliances are operating within the current self-improving system and have demonstrated that they can offer a range of professional development and school to school support and, most importantly, make a positive difference. While schools, either as individuals or in groups, make decisions about academisation, teaching schools continue to have a clear focus and remit. Those leading the teaching Schools in Leicestershire know that teaching school alliances need to evolve to meet the needs of schools. They are committed to ensuring that all school leaders have opportunity to participate in partnership and collaboration supports professional development and school improvement during this next phase of system evolution.

Website links to teaching schools Leicestershire

Following the website links will provide information and contact details for each of the teaching schools.

<http://www.affinitytsa.co.uk>

<http://www.forestway.tsa.org.uk/>

<http://www.loughboroughlearningalliance.org.uk>

<http://www.olpteachingschool.org>

<http://stepteachingschool.co.uk>

<http://telaonline.co.uk>