

**A MAT leader's guide  
to a trust website that  
everyone will love**

# Introduction

Attracting and retaining teachers, students, and new schools is more challenging than ever.

With enrolment numbers dropping, a recruitment crisis affecting schools of all sizes, and more schools actively seeking to join a trust, your trust's website plays a vital role. It's more than just a website - it's your shop window, often the first impression for prospective families, staff, and schools.

This guide will help MAT leaders like you make impactful, budget-friendly improvements to your trust website, boosting recruitment, community engagement, and trust growth.





## **Section 1:**

**Make your trust's  
first impression  
count**

# Did you know?

It takes **less than one second** for users to form an opinion about your trust's website.

A clean, modern design that resonates emotionally with visitors is key to building positive first impressions. This is particularly important for attracting prospective families, staff, and partner schools.

If the website is difficult to navigate, cluttered, or outdated, visitors will quickly move on, and that could mean missed opportunities for both enrolment and recruitment.

## **Expert tip:**

For a website that delivers a seamless user experience, ensure the following:

- A simple, clear layout
- Easy access to important information pages
- A mobile-friendly design
- Quick navigation (with key pages like "About Us," "Vision & Values," "Trust News," and "Careers" just a click away.)



## **Section 2:**

**Build content that  
resonates with  
your whole trust  
community**

Your trust's "**About Us**" page is an excellent place to showcase your trust's unique mission, vision, and values.

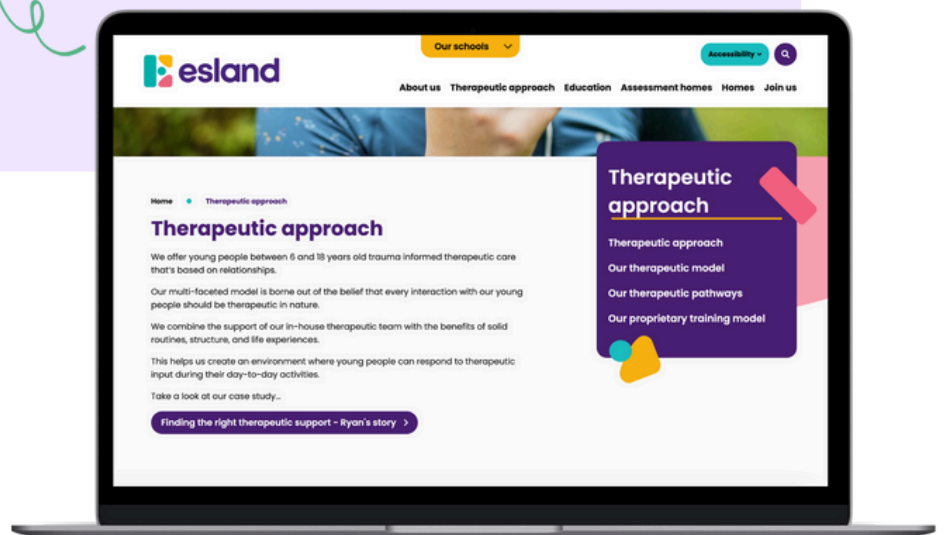
This is also an opportunity to address the broader community, from parents to staff and partner schools.

Parents care deeply about the happiness and well-being of their children, while staff will want to know how your trust supports career development and growth.

### Expert tip:

Research shows that while academic success is important, emotional well-being and physical health are the top priorities for parents.

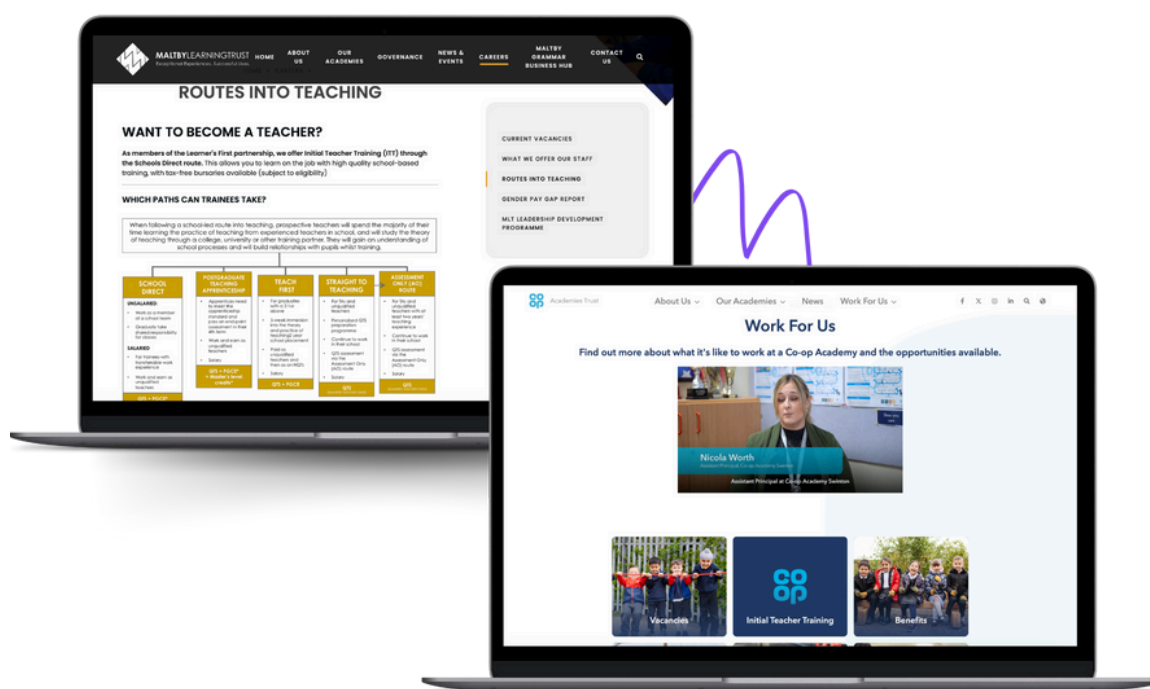
Make sure your content communicates a balanced approach to education, highlighting both academic rigour and the overall well-being of students.



Additionally, as a MAT leader, it's important to consider content that helps attract potential employees and new schools to your trust.

Consider including a **“Work for Us”** page, similar to Co-op Academies Trust or a **“Routes into Teaching”** page as shown on the Maltby Learning Trust website.

Both pages outline what your trust offers staff and schools within the job and how they can contribute to your mission.



Real-life testimonials are also vital for building trust. Use quotes from current staff, parents, or even students to show the real impact your trust has on its communities.

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Use quotes from current staff, parents, or even students to show the real impact your trust has on its communities.

That's exactly how we approach testimonials for the MAT websites we design - by showcasing real voices that reflect the heart of the trust. For example, here is an example from our own client, sharing how we've made an impact with their website.



**When embarking on this project, I instinctively turned to Juniper Education.**

**Having collaborated with them on a previous website project, I was confident in their capabilities and the exceptional service they consistently deliver.**

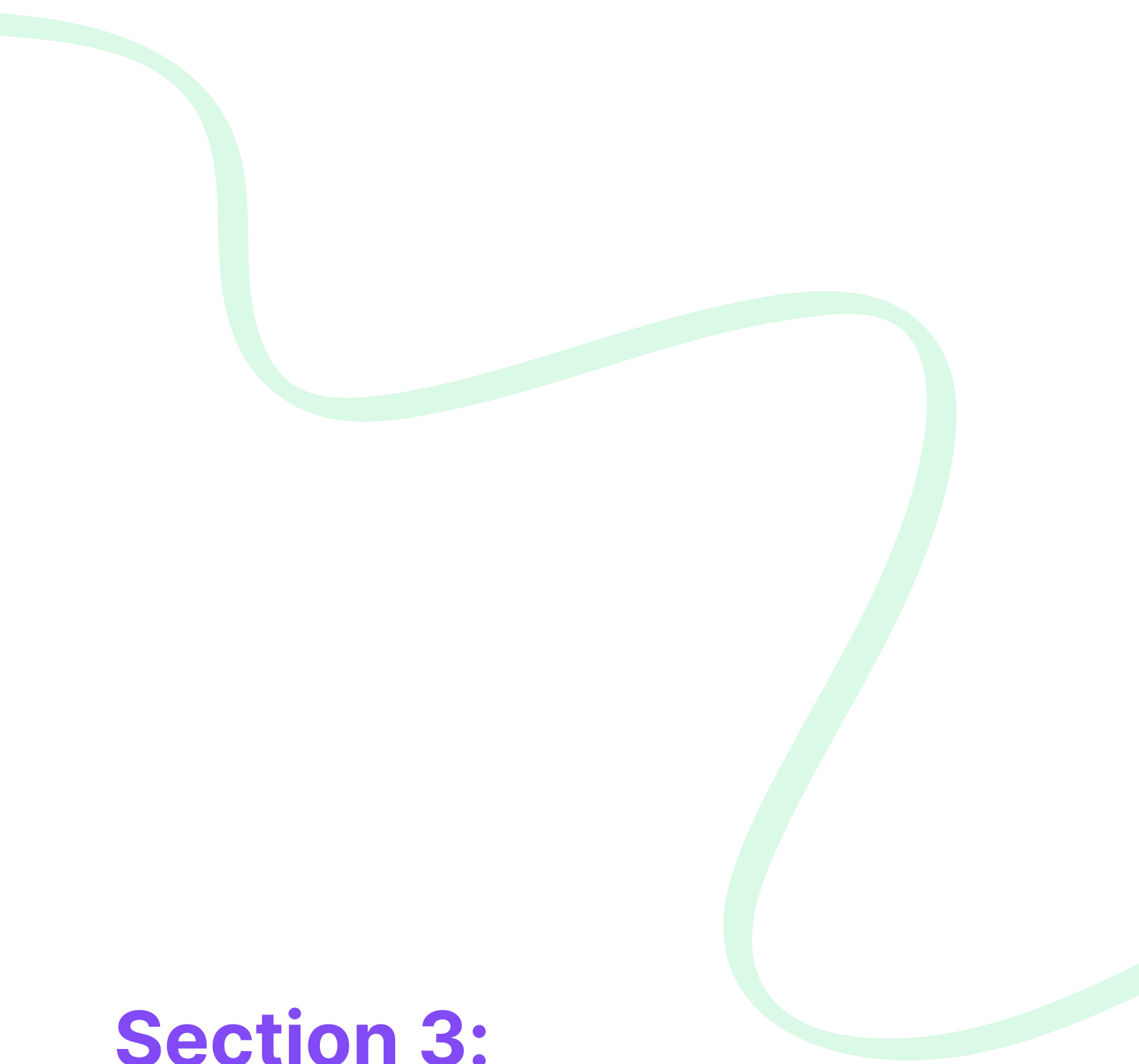


Chloe Fox

Secondary Lead for South West Teacher Training (SWTT) and Senior Leader at West Exe School







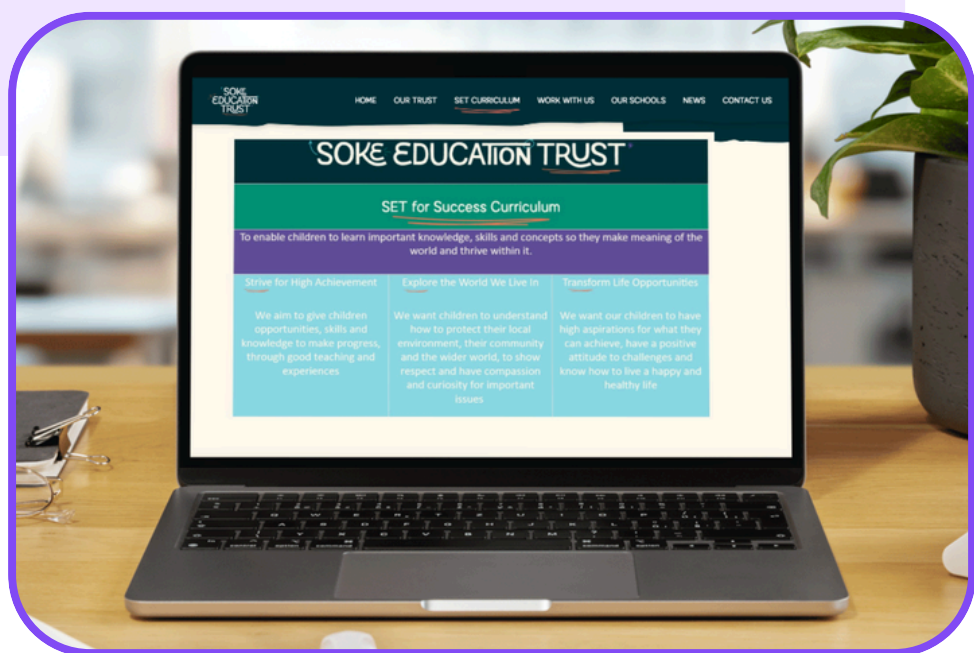
**Section 3:**  
**Show off your  
trust's  
achievements**

Celebrating the success of your schools is an excellent way to inspire confidence in your trust's values and educational standards.

Include real-life photos of school activities, award ceremonies, or school achievements, both big and small.

### Expert tip:

Highlight not just academic achievements but also social and emotional growth, diversity, and character development. This positions your trust as a holistic environment where students thrive in all aspects of life.



School leaders want to help prospective schools feel connected to the trust's community. Demonstrating how schools thrive and contribute within the trust can spark interest and encourage them to join, strengthening the trust's reputation and collaboration.



## **Section 4:**

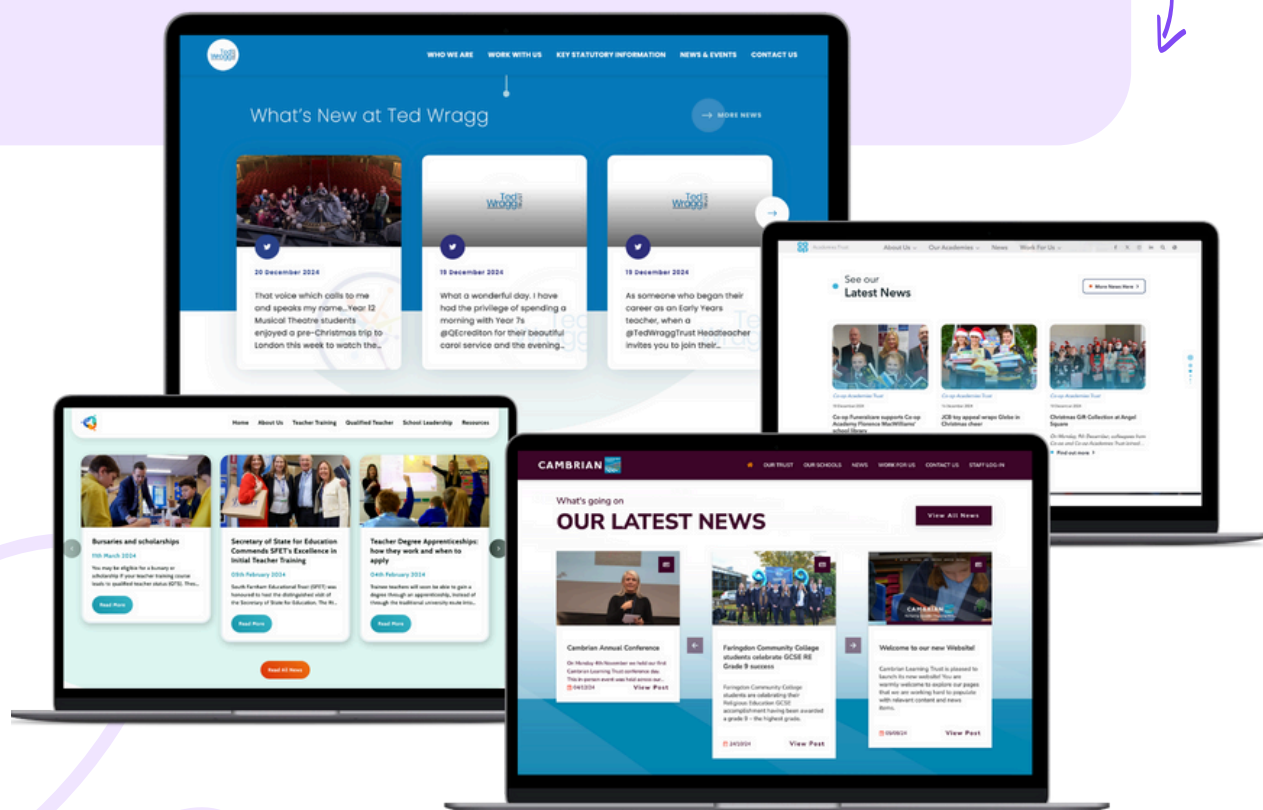
**Keep families  
coming back with  
engagement  
features**

## For MAT leaders, robust parental engagement is more critical than ever.

Your website can serve as a key tool in this by incorporating interactive features like event calendars, parent portals, and live social media feeds. These features keep your school community informed and involved, both during term time and over school holidays.

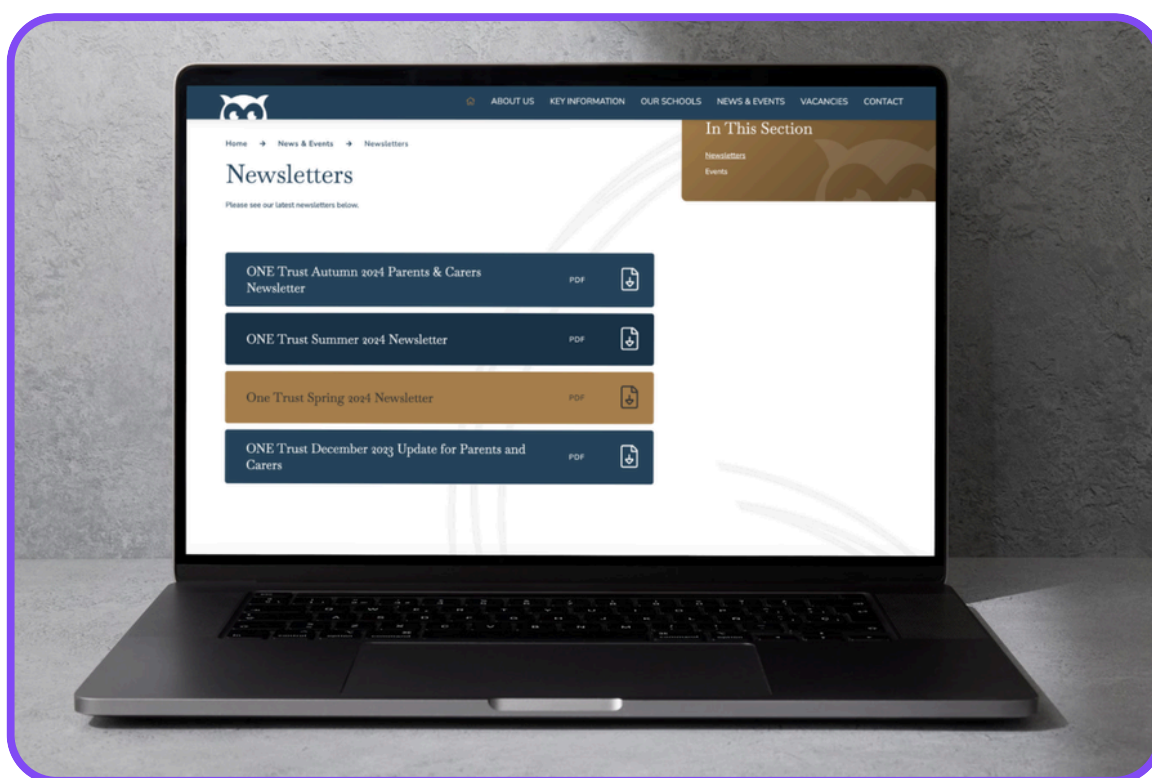
### Expert tip:

Integrate live social media feeds to show the day-to-day life at your schools and help parents feel connected to the school community. This also increases visibility and helps build trust with prospective families.



Also, parent newsletters are a great way to engage your community and reinforce your trust's brand.

Make sure to include clear calls to action (CTAs) like **"Sign up for our newsletter"** or to prompt action from parents at a trust level.





## **Section 5:**

# **Your trust's brand, vision, and values**

## Your trust's website should reflect its values and identity.

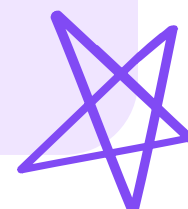
Your brand - colours, fonts, and imagery - helps convey the trust's ethos and creates a sense of cohesion across all your schools.

Use design to communicate warmth, professionalism, and forward-thinking leadership.

### Expert tip:

#### **Incorporate colour theory into your design.**

Cooler tones convey sophistication and rigour, while warmer tones suggest creativity, inclusivity, and community.



As a MAT leader, ensuring that your website clearly communicates your values is crucial for attracting families, staff and schools.

A strong, consistent visual identity helps convey professionalism and authenticity, which is critical for building trust across your communities and promoting growth within your MAT.



## **Section 6:**

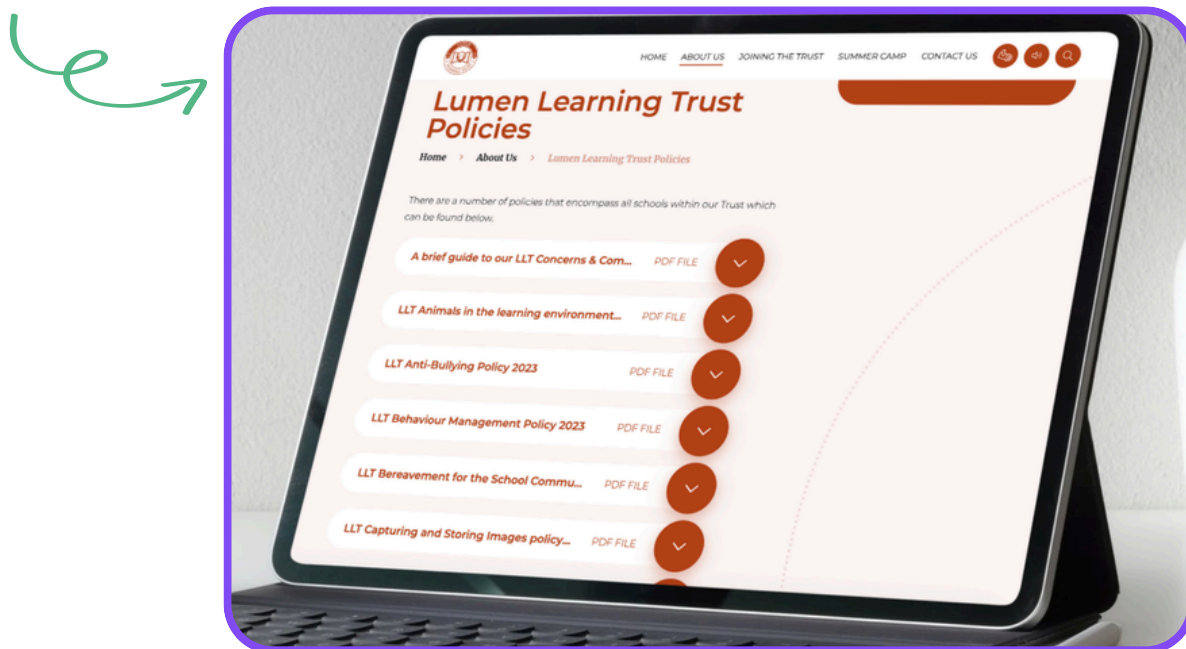
**Shared features to  
strengthen your  
trust website**



## Shared content:

Create content on the trust website and have it automatically mirrored on the school websites. This is ideal for trust-wide policies, trust values, or governance.

Here is an example of shared policies on [Lumen Learning Trust's website](#).



## Shared news:

Content from school websites' news feeds can be fed directly to the trust website homepage. This helps share the exciting news from across the trust while simultaneously keeping the website homepage updated (good for SEO!).



## Shared vacancies:

Delivered through a vacancy management portal or integration with 3rd party providers like My New Term, you can share career opportunities on the trust website.



## Clone website templates:

Use cloned website templates to establish a unified trust brand across all school websites, ensuring a **“golden thread of consistency”** while maintaining shared features and functionality.



## **Section 7:** **Optimise for mobile and accessibility**

Given the growing reliance on mobile devices, it's essential that your trust website is mobile-first.

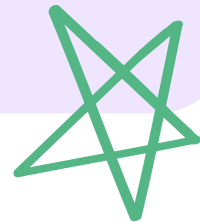
Optimising your website for mobile ensures a smooth experience for visitors accessing your site on smartphones and tablets.



**Expert tip:**

Regularly test your website on various devices to ensure that it remains user-friendly and functional across the board.

Also, consider accessibility - it's not only good practice but a legal requirement under [WCAG 2.2 AA standards](#).



## Inclusivity should be a priority.

Ensure your website is accessible to all members of your community, including those with disabilities.

Simple steps like adding alt text to images and ensuring readable fonts can make a world of difference.



## **Section 8:**

# **Budget-friendly choices with big impact**

You don't need to break the bank to improve your trust's website.

Here are some low-cost, high-impact ideas:

- **Welcome videos** are a fantastic way to personalise your trust website and introduce the MAT leadership team. A simple smartphone video can help humanise your trust's digital presence.
- **Embed social media feeds** to keep your trust website fresh and engaging.
- **Create an FAQ section** to address common queries from parents, prospective staff and schools.

### Expert tip:

If your trust is growing or looking to expand, highlighting your growth strategy and the benefits of joining your trust on your website can be a great way to attract new schools.



# **Section 9:** **Trust website quality checklist**



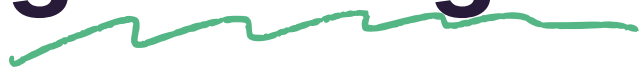
**To ensure your trust website is performing at its best, use this checklist to evaluate its quality:**

- Easy navigation
- User-friendly layout
- Mobile-friendly
- Brand cohesiveness
- Informative content
- Strong first impression
- Headteacher testimonials
- Shared school success stories
- Accessibility compliance
- Clear vision and values
- Staff recruitment page (e.g., "Work for Us")
- SEO-friendly keywords
- Shared live news feed
- Social media integration
- Clear calls to action
- About the trust page
- Schools within the trust page
- Trust governance information
- Trustee and leadership team details
- Trust-wide events and initiatives
- Trust-wide policies (e.g., safeguarding, SEND, curriculum policies)



## **Section 10:**

**Take your trust  
website from  
good to great**



## **Congratulations on taking the first step towards improving your trust's digital presence.**

Now, don't feel overwhelmed - small, incremental changes can make a big difference. Start by prioritising the areas that will impact your MAT's goals most.



### **Want a professional review of your trust's website?**

[Book a free consultation](#) with us today or simply the **scan the QR code** to see how we can help take your trust website to the next level.



# Want to know more?

At Juniper Education, we are experts in school website design helping over 7,500 schools and 300+ MATs shine online.

If you'd like to learn more about our creative solutions for schools and trusts, or need help with your trust website design, contact our team for a free consultation.

## Get in touch

[Visit our website](#)

[websites.junipereducation.org](https://websites.junipereducation.org)

