



TransforMATIVE

Empowering Multi-Academy Trust Growth: Strategic Digital Transformations in Education

A TransforMATIVE Roundtable Networking Dinner
in partnership with Bromcom
19.06.24, The Ivy, Birmingham

Executive Summary

We hosted a roundtable networking dinner that brought together leaders of multi-academy trusts (MATs) to delve into the transformative potential of digital technology strategies. This event focused on exploring the intricate balance between centralisation and autonomy in MAT operations, leveraging data and insights for strategic leadership decisions, and the pivotal role of partnerships in the educational technology ecosystem. Attendees engaged in rich discussions aimed at harnessing digital platforms and data ecosystems to support and accelerate MAT growth. Whether they were looking to refine their current digital strategy or were in the early stages of digital adoption, this gathering provided valuable insights and practical approaches.



Themes of Learning



1. Centralisation vs Autonomy in MAT Operations

- ✓ **Balancing Centralised Policies with School-Specific Innovation**
MATs could encourage innovation at the school level while ensuring alignment with central policies through structured feedback loops and collaborative decision-making processes.
- ✓ **Enhancing Collaboration through Digital Tools:**
Utilising digital platforms and tools can facilitate seamless communication and collaboration between central leadership and schools while respecting autonomy. Platforms should support sharing best practices and adapting centrally developed tools to local needs.
- ✓ **Professional Development for Autonomy within Digital Strategies:**
MATs need robust professional development programmes that empower school leaders and staff with the skills to implement and adapt digital strategies autonomously. This includes training on using data effectively and aligning technology with educational goals.
- ✓ **Mechanisms for Balancing Directives and Autonomy:** Implementing periodic reviews and feedback mechanisms can help MATs evaluate the effectiveness of central directives versus school autonomy. Flexibility in policies and clear communication channels are crucial for adjusting strategies based on school-level needs and feedback.



2. Leveraging Data and Insights for Strategic Leadership Decisions

- ✓ **Supporting Decision-Making with Centralised Data:** Centralised data collection enables informed decision-making at both central and school levels. MATs could invest in robust data infrastructure that allows for real-time insights and trend analysis to drive strategic initiatives.
- ✓ **Integrating Data Analytics into Operations:** Best practices include establishing clear data governance frameworks, ensuring data quality, and providing training on data interpretation. AI can enhance predictive analytics and streamline data-driven decision processes.
- ✓ **Ensuring Stakeholder Proficiency in Data Use:** MAT leaders should prioritise data literacy across all levels of the organisation. Training programmes and accessible reporting tools can empower stakeholders to interpret data insights effectively and make informed decisions.
- ✓ **Measuring Impact on Student Outcomes:** MATs could develop metrics that track the impact of data-driven initiatives on student performance and school outcomes. Continuous evaluation allows for refining strategies based on measurable outcomes and adapting to changing educational needs.

Themes of Learning



3. The Crucial Role of Partnerships in the Ed-Tech Ecosystem

- ✓ **Aligning EdTech Partnerships with Educational Goals:** MATs could select partners whose solutions align with their educational vision and strategic priorities. Criteria should include scalability, support, integration capabilities, and alignment with curriculum needs.
- ✓ **Evaluating Partnership Effectiveness:** Regular evaluation of partnerships based on predefined criteria ensures alignment with evolving educational needs and the achievement of intended outcomes. Transparency and communication are key to maintaining effective partnerships.
- ✓ **Sustaining Long-Term Relationships:** Strategies such as clear communication, shared goals, and mutual accountability foster long-term relationships with technology providers and other stakeholders. Collaborative planning and flexibility in adapting to technological advancements are crucial.
- ✓ **Integrating EdTech Solutions into a Cohesive Ecosystem:** MATs could develop a cohesive strategy for integrating various EdTech solutions into existing infrastructure. This involves interoperability, scalability, and alignment with educational objectives to create a seamless user experience across schools.



Conclusion

The discussions around centralisation vs autonomy, leveraging data for strategic decisions, and building effective partnerships in the EdTech ecosystem highlight critical considerations for MATs aiming to enhance educational outcomes through technology and data-driven practices.

Key Takeaways: MATs need to strike a balance between central directives and school autonomy, leveraging digital tools and professional development to empower stakeholders. Effective use of data analytics can drive informed decision-making, improve operational efficiency, and optimise student outcomes. Building and sustaining partnerships with EdTech providers require alignment with educational goals, ongoing evaluation, and integration into a cohesive ecosystem.

Future Focus: Future efforts should focus on refining data strategies, enhancing digital literacy across all stakeholders, and fostering collaborative partnerships that support innovative educational practices. MATs could continually adapt their strategies to leverage emerging technologies and best practices in education.