



Transformative

# The Role of Digital Transformation in Establishing Best-in-Class, Sustainable Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) of the Future

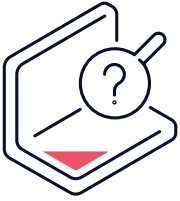
A Transformative Roundtable Networking Dinner  
Sponsored by Civica 03.07.24, The Ivy, Canary Wharf, London

## Executive Summary

In an era where technology is reshaping the educational landscape, the significance of digital transformation for Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) cannot be overstated. This roundtable event, curated for MAT Leaders, delves into the pivotal role that digital strategies play in fostering sustainable and high-performing MATs for the future. Discussions focused on enhancing operational efficiency, addressing sustainability challenges, fostering partnerships, and leveraging key learning themes to drive future research and innovation.



# Insights and Strategies



## Overview

The transformative roundtable event brought together MAT leaders to discuss the role of digital transformation in shaping the future of education. The event highlighted how digital strategies can enhance operational efficiency, support sustainability, foster collaboration, and drive innovation within MATs. Key themes included the implementation of low-code technologies, the importance of centralising processes, and the critical role of partnerships in achieving strategic goals.



## Efficiency & Effectiveness of Operations

### Streamlining Administrative Processes

One of the main themes was how digital transformation can streamline administrative processes to reduce workload for staff and enable better outcomes for students. Several MAT leaders shared examples of using low-code platforms to automate routine tasks, such as invoice processing and leave requests, which significantly reduced the time and resources spent on these activities.

### Centralisation and Adaptability

Centralising processes across schools within a trust was highlighted as a key strategy for enhancing efficiency. By standardising systems and workflows, MATs can achieve greater consistency and reduce duplication of efforts. This approach also allows for easier scaling and adaptation as the trust grows.



## Solving Our Sustainability Issues

### Financial Sustainability

Financial sustainability is a critical challenge for many MATs. Leaders discussed the importance of investing in technologies that provide a good return on investment (ROI). For example, automating invoice processing can reduce the need for additional finance staff, freeing up resources for other critical areas.

### Environmental Sustainability

Digital transformation also plays a role in supporting environmental sustainability efforts. By moving towards paperless operations and leveraging digital tools for communication and collaboration, MATs can reduce their environmental footprint while also achieving cost savings.



## Partnerships & Collaboration

### Leveraging External Expertise

The importance of partnerships was a recurring theme. MATs can benefit from collaborating with technology providers and other external partners to access specialised expertise and resources. These partnerships can help MATs implement and optimise digital solutions more effectively.

# Insights and Strategies

## Internal Collaboration

Fostering a culture of collaboration within the trust is equally important. By sharing best practices and leveraging the collective expertise of staff across different schools, MATs can drive continuous improvement and innovation. This collaborative approach also helps in building a sense of community and shared purpose among staff.



## Key Learning Themes

### Change Management

Successful digital transformation requires effective change management. This includes engaging stakeholders, providing adequate training, and managing the cultural shift that accompanies new technologies. Leaders emphasised the need for clear communication and support throughout the transformation process to ensure buy-in and smooth implementation.

### Balancing Autonomy and Consistency

Finding the right balance between school autonomy and centralised consistency is crucial. While standardisation can drive efficiency, it is important to allow individual schools the flexibility to innovate and tailor solutions to their unique needs. This balance helps maintain a sense of ownership and responsiveness at the local level while benefiting from the efficiencies of centralisation.



## Conclusions

Digital transformation is essential for MATs to become best-in-class, sustainable organisations. By leveraging digital tools to streamline operations, address sustainability challenges, and foster collaboration, MATs can enhance their performance and better serve their communities. The insights shared during the roundtable provide a roadmap for MAT leaders to navigate the complexities of digital transformation and achieve their strategic goals.



## Future Research

Future research should focus on:

- ✓ Evaluating the long-term impact of digital transformation on educational outcomes and operational efficiency.
- ✓ Exploring the role of emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence and machine learning, in further enhancing MAT operations.
- ✓ Developing best practice frameworks for balancing centralization with school autonomy.
- ✓ Investigating the effectiveness of different change management strategies in diverse educational contexts.