



EvaluateMySchool Supporting LiFE Multi Academy Trust's Self-Improvement Journey

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"It's completely transformed the way I work. I don't say that lightly." - Lara Hall



AT A GLANCE

EVALUATIONS

- SEND
- Safeguarding
- Disadvantaged strategy
- Attendance

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS

10

REGION

East Midlands

Introduction

LiFE Multi Academy Trust (LiFE MAT) is a growing trust based in Leicestershire, consisting of 10 schools— six secondary and four primary. At the forefront of their improvement journey is Lara Hall, Director of School Improvement, who has been instrumental in embedding EvaluateMySchool's (EMS) self-evaluation platform across the trust. This case study explores how EMS has transformed school improvement processes at LiFE MAT, fostering collaboration, accountability, and measurable impact.

The Need for a New Approach

Upon joining LiFE MAT as Director of Inclusion and Safeguarding, Lara was tasked with introducing a more effective approach to trust-wide evaluations for areas of inclusion in the first instance. Across many schools and trusts, safeguarding approaches rely on outdated, top-down audits. This simply did not align with the trust's collaborative and innovation-driven ethos so change was needed. Lara recognised that for self-evaluation to be meaningful, it needed to be school-led, actionable, and embedded in everyday practice.

LiFE MAT first engaged with EMS through its SEND module via the Whole Education Network. Seeing its potential, Lara quickly expanded its use to other areas, including safeguarding and disadvantaged pupils. The trust's approach was built on:

- **School-led self-evaluation:** School-led self-evaluation: Schools conduct their own evaluations, allowing them to take ownership of their improvement areas.
- **Trust-wide benchmarking:** Schools receive a comparative overview, enabling them to identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas for collaboration.
- **Continuous updating:** Key policy changes, such as updates to Prevent Duty and alternative provision regulations, are added to the system to ensure compliance and best practice.

Transformational Impact

EvaluateMySchool has been a game-changer for LiFE MAT in several key areas:

1. Safeguarding: A Cultural Shift in Accountability

The safeguarding module has had a particularly significant impact. Rather than relying on a one-off, top-down audit, schools now use the EMS platform to self-evaluate their safeguarding measures continuously. Benefits have included:

- Proactive accountability: DSLs (Designated Safeguarding Leads) regularly update their evaluations, ensuring they never miss critical actions.
- A structured approach: Schools rate themselves using LiFE MAT's school improvement continuum (Emerging, Embracing, Excelling), allowing for targeted support where needed.

- Trust-wide visibility: The trust board and leadership team can access real-time data, ensuring strategic decision-making is based on accurate and up-to-date evaluations.

2. Attendance: Immediate, Measurable Improvement

When LiFE MAT introduced the attendance self-evaluation module, it became clear that some schools lacked structured attendance meetings. By embedding EMS evaluations, schools quickly identified gaps in their weekly attendance processes and implemented more robust routines. Although it is early on in implementation, the impact so far is:

- Better collaboration: Schools supporting each other to improve attendance processes.
- Increased efficiency: Senior leaders saving time by identifying key issues without manual audits.
- Data-driven improvement: Benchmarking across schools has highlighted best practices that can be shared trust-wide.

3. Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing

One of the most powerful aspects of EMS has been its ability to foster collaboration across the trust. Lara has facilitated 'buddy' partnerships where stronger-performing schools support others. Schools proactively reach out to each other, reducing the need for central intervention. As a result:

- Best practices are shared organically.
- Schools receive targeted support from peers.
- Improvement is seen as a collective trust-wide responsibility, not a top-down mandate.

Key opportunities for "ground-up innovation" ensuring that leaders are driving the improvements at all levels of the organisation.

Ofsted & External Validation

Another benefit of EMS has been its role in preparing schools for Ofsted inspections. One school awaiting inspection has used the platform to track its safeguarding improvements meticulously, giving leadership confidence in their self-evaluation. Inspectors have noted that the tool has supported 'tenacious leadership of safeguarding,' ensuring that schools are not just compliant but continuously striving for excellence.

Looking Forwards

Building on its success, LiFE MAT is expanding its use of EMS to:

- Alternative provision
- Assessment and outcomes

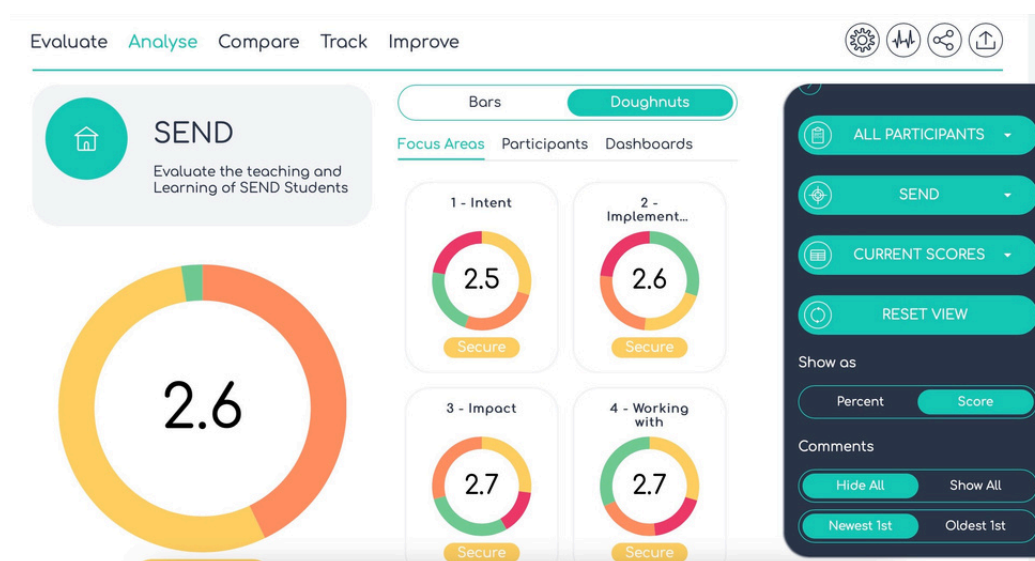
Lara is also exploring ways to enhance dashboard visualisation for trustees, ensuring they have clear, high-level insights into school performance.

Conclusion

EvaluateMySchool has transformed self-evaluation at LiFE MAT, embedding a culture of continuous improvement, accountability, and collaboration. Schools now drive their own improvement journeys with structured, real-time data at their fingertips. As Lara puts it:

"It's completely transformed the way I work. I don't say that lightly."

For LiFE MAT, EMS is more than a self-evaluation tool—it is the backbone of school improvement across the trust, ensuring that every school can identify, act on, and sustain meaningful progress.



Example data from the EMS platform

