

# Case Study: Employment Law & HR at Griffin Schools Trust



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## Overview

Griffin Schools Trust was founded more than a decade ago by a group of experienced educationalists who took on a small portfolio of schools needing improvement.

Now headquartered in Bromley, Kent, GST has recently grown to 13 primary and secondary schools across the Midlands and the South East, with most of them of graded good or outstanding by Ofsted.

HR services and support was provided by Strictly Education until spring 2025 when the service was transferred to Judicium Education.

The level of support has changed and developed as GST has expanded, says GST CEO Anne Powell. "Our schools have always been spread over a number of different local authorities in different geographic regions of the country so some sort of standardisation across our schools in HR processes has been important, even though we want our schools to maintain their individuality and autonomy in other areas," explains Anne.

"We've always been a head-led trust, but HR was one of the first things that we agreed we needed to align on. It was that need to have shared processes, common practices, and then to move from the reactionary to the developmental."



## The Response

When GST was formed all schools had different HR contracts, or no HR contract at all. "It was the same with everything: payroll, finance systems, school operations – every system you might expect to find in a school, we had a different version of it across our portfolio of schools," says Anne.

That development over the years – GST now has 700 staff – means that while recruitment never stops, GST now sees its HR services as being focused on people strategy, getting the best out of its current staff and ensuring that the trust's people needs can be met in the future.

The focus now is freeing up GST's leaders to focus on providing excellent opportunities to pupils by making HR and other back-office processes simpler and more streamlined. The support provided by the experts at Judicium has been instrumental in this.

That relationship has encouraged the development of HR strategy at GST, says

Anne; rather than solving problems the expertise is being used to equip the back-office team with the skills that they can then go away and use.

"The relationship has gone from calling on our HR consultants when we had an HR issue or a question to accessing the whole suite of HR resources and services that Judicium offers. So, our operations teams are now more likely to be using the HR resources hub and access the webinars or training modules."

One of those training modules focused on developing people strategies and recruitment strategies. The session provided valuable guidance for GST on developing their people from apprenticeships through the headteacher level and beyond.

GST also relies on Judicium for updates on legislation changes. "School leaders are busy and may not have the time to read every new HR directive so we rely on Judicium for that expertise which we may not have as educators."

“There are new statutory policies and guidelines published all the time and we need to respond and adapt. That’s why it’s so good to have experts at hand to call on. It also means that we can anticipate these changes and be prepared. We feel supported and gain the understanding and the training to be able to deal with change.”



**Having better systems, processes and support in areas like HR has helped us to become a more mature organisation, with a strong infrastructure, and that has also helped our pupil strategy.**

**Anne Powell,  
Chief Executive Officer**



## The Result

Judicium's support has been particularly helpful during difficult times. Falling rolls at one of the trust's schools led to a restructure, with some roles having to be made redundant. HR support proved invaluable during this stressful process, ensuring that all affected were given the support they needed.

When a new school joined the trust in September 2025 Judicium support meant that the process went extremely smoothly.

Staff from the new school were supported through the process of transferring their contracts from the local authority to the trust. Any issues were quickly resolved and the school is now benefiting from the HR service.

“I think our new school is really benefiting from the additional support that they're getting as part of a group of schools,” says Anne.

Anne believes that the HR service has helped to promote retention and support GST with its development of new leaders. “I think, particularly when you're looking at leadership recruitment, it's a big change for people to move from being a deputy head to headteacher or from a head to an executive head.

“One of the things that can be scary is the legal side, the HR side. I think that's something that school leaders can be quite afraid of because of the stories they read about people being taken to court and tribunals. I think this is a side of headship that people may not have experience of until they've actually been in that position. We don't have many difficult cases because heads feel supported and they know when to ask for help.”

“We are always thinking about how we can be more proactive with our teams, supporting and developing people to progress their careers,” she says. “We're now training up new leaders to have this approach so they can identify and develop the next generation of leaders, and we track their progress meticulously, always looking at how we can develop our talent pipeline by providing people with great developmental opportunities.”



“

Judicium Education feels like part of our back-office,” says Anne. “The service and support they give us isn't one size fits all; they have taken time to build up a deep understanding of who we are, what we do and where we want to go. That makes it very personal.

**Anne Powell,  
Chief Executive Officer**

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