3-Year Strategic Plan

2023 – 2026

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thesovereigntrust.uk

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1. Foreword

The Sovereign Trust (TST) was founded in 2016 and has the highest ambitions possible for everyone we work with. Although our values and strategic aims have remained consistent, we are a very different Trust. We are considerably larger, and we also have in place many of the structures first envisaged: finance systems, an HR team, estates, and IT. We present this plan after the COVID-19 pandemic: a time that has stretched our resources and resilience, eliciting the most remarkable response from our schools. The Trust (and by that, we mean our staff) has adapted and learned, showing amazing flexibility.

We are a Multi Academy Trust with a caring mindset for excellence. The Sovereign Trust academies include special educational needs for primary, secondary, and College.

Our academies work across highly diverse communities, including Salford, Trafford, and Warrington. Standards and expectations in trust academies are high, with the focus being on inspiring and nurturing pupils to fulfil their potential and enabling them to have a brilliant future. We help our communities thrive by giving children the best opportunity to learn inside and outside the classroom.

The Children & Families Act (2014) changed the landscape of provision for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The special educational needs regulations 2014 (Statutory Instrument No 1652), which came into force on 1st Sept. 2014, means there is now a legislative framework opening the door for children and families to take control of services so that they best meet their needs. However, this is not always the easiest pathway, and we know that some pupils' fall through the net' or 'do not meet the criteria', often finishing their education at 16 or even 19, with nowhere else to go.

The most recent White Paper focuses on the features of what a 'Strong Trust' looks like and will form the basis of our strategy over the next 3 years. In addition, the recommendations of the SEND Review and Green Paper will have an impact on the strategy.

At the Sovereign Trust, we believe that we have a key role to play in helping affect that change by supporting families to make informed choices and by creating provisions that can support our children to have that brilliant future they so deserve.

We firmly believe in the sentiments of the quote by Kofi Annan, 'The State of the World's Children' 2000.

'There is no trust more sacred than the one the world holds with children. There is no duty more important than ensuring that their rights are respected, that their welfare is protected, that their lives are free from fear and want and that they grow up in peace'.

We have high expectations for our staff, our children and our families. These are reflected in the Values and Vision of the Trust.

We believe that the potential for our children to achieve and have a brilliant future is often very closely linked with their social development and that – whilst there are services available for some of our children beyond the offer from our schools – the experience of each child is inconsistent. Environmental factors play a large part in the child's potential to become employed or sustain a place at College. There is no overarching strategy to link services together and ensure that a child's education, health, and care planning makes a real difference in their lives and supports them for long enough. The Sovereign Trust believes that we can help to bridge that gap. The Strategic objectives set out in this 3-year plan will help to drive whole-scale change to ensure our children have as many opportunities and successful experiences together with a range of choices available to them, including:

- access to high-quality provisions from all our schools;
- access to high-quality post-16 provisions and pathways;
- access to high-quality post-19 provisions and pathways;

We are focused on the quality of education by clearly theorising our school improvement strategy:

- Every teacher in every classroom to be as good as they can be in what they teach and how they teach
- Improvement for pupils can only be gained by improvement in Teaching, and that can only be gained by providing the best professional development for teachers

We have a strong belief in the value of lifelong learning. Our staff is our best resource, and it is our privilege to be involved with such experienced, committed, and child-centered individuals. It is with and through them that we will make our vision a reality.

Paul Eckley, Chief Executive Officer

Sue Gill, Chair of Board of Directors

2. Vision and Values

Vision - "To be a centre of excellence for learning and development for pupils with special educational needs."

In order to achieve our vision, we have the following mission statement:





- We will offer all pupils access to innovative SEND education in the highest quality environments together with wider Trust collaboration and expertise, providing opportunities for enriched learning and pathways to employment and independence.
- We will support every pupil to flourish through a challenging, wider curriculum and enjoyment in learning for life. We provide opportunities for our children to have a brilliant future. In addition, we provide opportunities for innovative developments in financial and non-financial areas through synergies and savings across the Trust.
- Our Trust values and celebrates, and builds partnerships.
- We will ensure the future viability of the Trust.

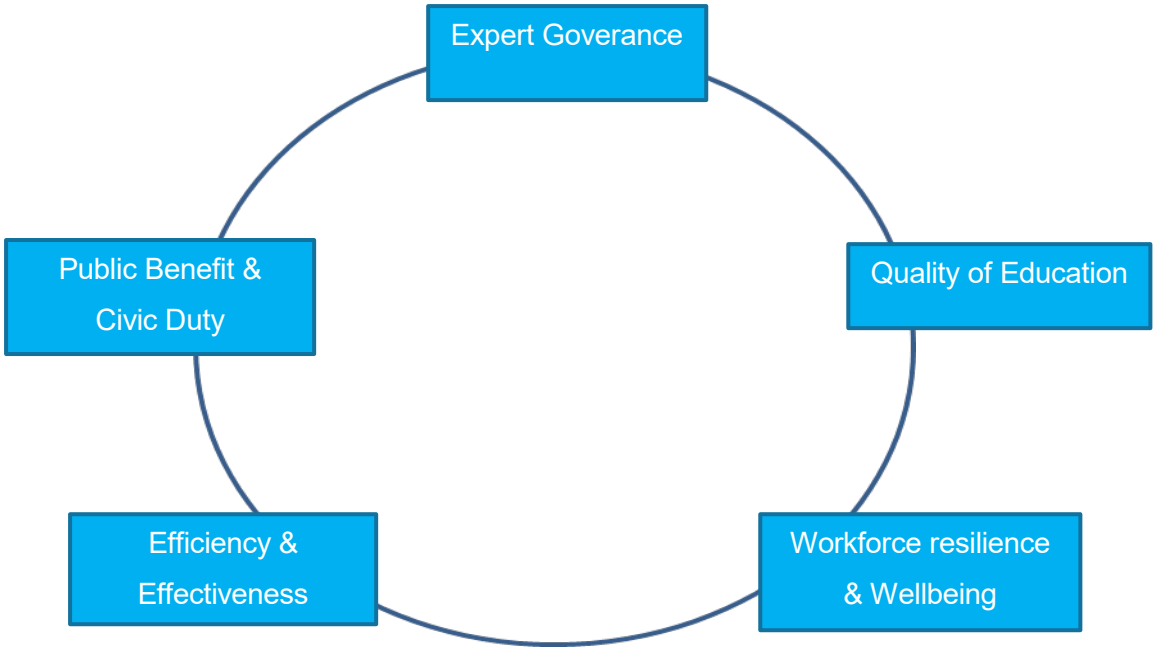
Underpinning our vision and mission statement are our core values. The Sovereign Trust MAT is a family of schools that believe that by learning and growing together, we can:

Respect	We value the diversity of our school communities and welcome all pupils to our academies. We remain vigilant in how we treat each other, ensuring respect for each other and the views of others.
Integrity	We work in a culture of Trust, honesty, and transparency with each other, ensuring every decision serves the pupils of the Trust equally.
Opportunity	We hold inclusion in the heart of everything we do, ensuring everyone is equally valued and given equal opportunities.
Community	We foster a sense of community throughout the Trust and within our academies that support pupils, families, and colleagues in nurturing individual potential and the love of learning.
Enjoyment	We encourage fun and enjoyment in our curriculum that supports a positive learning environment.

The Sovereign Trust Board of Directors **have agreed on five key strategic objectives** for The Trust, which will steer our growth and development over the next 3 years. These are:

- Improving the Quality of Education across all our schools;
- Creating expert governance to drive school improvement;
- Build sustainable people strategies to deliver education for the public benefit
- Create effective and efficient centralised processes and back-office functions to enable schools to focus on Teaching and knowledge building.
- Create the conditions for people to flourish and advance education for all, not just those in our schools.

In developing a provision that is truly astonishing, we believe this cannot be achieved without the following characteristics:



- Expert governance;
- Teachers to be as good as they can be in what they teach (curriculum), and pupils to be supported effectively in their learning;
- Teachers to be as good as they can be in how they teach (pedagogy);
- Safe and well-resourced schools;
- Building a sustainable education workforce;
- Efficiency and effectiveness of operational structures;
- Understanding of the civic responsibility of the Trust to advance education for the public good

2.1 Strategic Objective 1: Improving the Quality of Education across all our schools over the next 3 years;

- To ensure our schools provide the best Teaching and promote high-quality learning and strong outcomes for our children and young people, enabling staff to make a real difference to pupils in every school
- To develop our Professional development strategy to deliver excellent Teaching and learning through knowledge-building and evidence-based approaches, disseminate best practices, and grow current and future leaders
- To support schools in developing and enhancing an exciting curriculum by enabling opportunities to share high-quality resources and expertise.
- To ensure that all schools improve their Ofsted grading if they require improvement or in a category of concern on joining the Trust, or maintain their grading if good or outstanding
- To ensure a rigorous and robust programme of quality assurance that helps support staff, build expertise and capacity and raise standards to deliver positive outcomes for the pupils.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Indicators of Success:</th></tr>
<tr><th>Year 1</th><th>Year 2</th><th>Year 3</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Every Member of staff in every classroom to be as good as they can be in what they teach and how they teach supported by excellent coaching and mentoring.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">A Trust-wide appraisal system that encourages all staff to develop in line with the SIP and in developing their own skill sets to support Teaching and learning across the Trust.</td></tr>
<tr><td>A Trust-wide School improvement strategy that supports the development of staff and the curriculum to meet the diverse needs of the learners in each school.</td><td colspan="2">School improvement is a collaborative strategic enterprise across the Trust informed by excellent CPD opportunities to ensure the very best Teaching and learning for all pupils.</td></tr>
<tr><td>To enhance our professional development strategy to create conditions for teachers to promote real learning through knowledge-building and evidence-based approaches.</td><td>Leaders are supported to think carefully about the strategic long-term plan for Teaching and Learning in each school.</td><td>Strategic leadership is strong in all our schools. All leaders have a clarity of vision and know how to create alignment around Teaching and learning.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Demonstrate the power of the curriculum together with teacher development to transform teaching quality.</td><td colspan="2">To review the curriculum as a result of research. Develop new curriculum models to meet the specific needs of different cohorts of pupils.</td></tr>
</table>

2.2 Strategic Objective 2: Creating expert governance to drive school improvement

- To ensure the quality of education is at the heart of everything the Board of Trustees does.
- To ensure that the Board of Trustees acts in the best interests of the Trust, governing in accordance with its articles of association and having governance arrangements that demonstrate vision, clarity of relationships, effective oversight, and sustainability whilst achieving the greatest possible economies and value to schools.
- To ensure an effective succession plan for the Board of Trustees to guarantee the stability and security of the Trust.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Indicators of Success:</th></tr>
<tr><th>Year 1</th><th>Year 2</th><th>By Year 3</th></tr>
<tr><td>The quality of education is at the heart of everything the Board does, facilitated by the new reporting system of each school.</td><td>The Board identifies aspects of the quality of education and is assigned specific roles within each category. Quality of Education; Behaviour and Attitudes; Personal Development; Leadership and Management, Safeguarding and Health and safety</td><td>Trustees are skilled in specific areas supporting schools and other trustees to make informed decisions. In addition, Trustees can give feedback to Ofsted.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Trustees become academy champions developing knowledge of the nature, skills, and challenges of working within the academy.

Trust meetings are to be held at different academies to enhance knowledge.</td><td>Review champion placement to develop wider Trustee knowledge and understanding of Teaching and learning in different academies.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Trustees and Advisors complete self-assessments to identify any capacity lost due to the pandemic</td><td>A training programme for Trustees and Advisors that supports skills and effective governance at all levels.</td><td>Trust engages with external review of governance</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Timely and clear information on education quality is presented regularly to the Board to ensure informed decisions.</td></tr>
<tr><td>The Board undertakes professional development to ensure that they understand and can discharge their duties regarding school improvement</td><td>Training needs are identified, and resources used to upskill trust members</td><td>The Board is a well-resourced asset to the Trust. The Board has a complement of skilled individuals who can discharge their duties effectively.</td></tr>
</table>

2.3 Strategic Objective 3: Build Sustainable people strategies to deliver education for the public benefit

- To provide staff with excellent professional learning opportunities to support their career progression.
- To develop future leaders, headteachers, and Chairs of Schools AAC to ensure effective succession planning for the Trust Academies/Schools.
- To attract, develop and retain talented, capable staff to posts in our Academies/Schools and central team.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Indicators of Success:</th></tr>
<tr><th>Year 1</th><th>Year 2</th><th>By Year 3</th></tr>
<tr><td>Develop a Trust wide 'evidence-informed' professional development plan for all staff throughout their careers to build a sustainable workforce</td><td>Creation of a trust-wide strategy group to review good practices across the Trust to provide training and support to enhance Teaching and learning.</td><td>Development of staff and schools help to achieve the best outcomes for pupils. CPD is presented within the Trust to enhance good practice across all schools.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Establish a career development structure to allow opportunities for the development of all staff across the Trust by engaging with the leadership teams across the schools. Ensure that all staff receive a meaningful and timely appraisal</td><td>Utilise effective appraisal arrangements and systems to improve the accessibility of career opportunities. To develop staff</td><td>Develop and improve existing career development opportunities.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">To harmonise staff pay across the Trust, ensuring fairness and clarity, facilitating movement between schools, and allowing staff to develop in a wider, more varied environment.

Ensuring the Trust is an employer of choice improving recruitment.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Engage with staff to assess and promote the Trust as an employer, e.g. rewards, well-being, developments, etc. Develop a well-being strategy to support a manageable work-life balance.</td><td>To continue to develop our well-being, offering to support our employees further. To offer staff development routes to enable them to develop in their roles and beyond.</td><td>Staff recognise that as an employer, they are given opportunities for well-being and staff development routes to enable them to progress in their roles and beyond.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Engage with schools on how to enhance our succession planning.</td><td>Develop succession planning across the Trust, enabling the mobility of staff.</td><td>Succession planning is coherent and recognised across the Trust, with skilled staff receiving CPD and</td></tr>
</table>

		mentoring to enhance succession planning.
Develop the Trust's employer brand as an organisation with ambition and a sound future. Develop the 'people section' on the Trust's website to improve people's attraction	Trust becomes to be seen as an employer of choice. As a result, interested parties can easily access information regarding the Trust and employment within the Trust.	The Trust is an employer of choice in the region.

2.4 Strategic Objective 4: Create effective and efficient centralised processes and back-office functions to enable Academies/Schools to focus on Teaching and knowledge building.

- To ensure that the Trust has business arrangements that are efficient and effective and enables it to deliver on its commitments to grow and prosper and to deliver value for money across all operations.
- To optimise the budget, we will aim to deliver best practices while simultaneously minimising risk and providing value for money.
- To support schools to maximise the resources to improve outcomes for children and young people through activities such as joint procurement of services to bring about better value for money and economies of scale.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Indicators of Success:</th></tr>
<tr><th>Year 1</th><th>Year 2</th><th>Year 3</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Continue establishing effective centralised processes and back office functions in Finance, HR, IT, Estates, and School Improvement.
To review current practices to ensure economies of scale are achieved.</td><td>Practices are embedded to ensure value for money and aid efficiencies across the schools and the Trust.</td></tr>
<tr><td>SWOT analysis of the Trust's capacity.
To build capacity and skills in the central team to facilitate the introduction of new schools into the Trust.</td><td colspan="2">Central team services are scaled to accommodate any increase in demand</td></tr>
<tr><td>Review our estates' services function across the Trust to develop more agile, cost-efficient, and effective service.
Effectively use the Estates system to support improvements.
To review the power used to ensure efficiencies across the Trust</td><td colspan="2">Implement an Estates model in schools in line with review outcomes. To work towards a 'net zero' ambition. Research and Identify funding streams. Implement carbon reduction streams.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Develop the IT infrastructure and interconnectivity to support our educational and operational aims.
To increase our resilience to cyber security threats.
To establish a network of IT professionals across the Trust.</td><td colspan="2">Reducing points of failure and increasing efficiency across the Trust.
Develop, consult, and implement opportunities to enhance consistency and collaboration on IT between schools.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Continued improvement in financial management arrangements at Trust and school level to develop effective and time-efficient processes and procedures.</td></tr>
<tr><td>To review and implement an HR system that will reduce the workloads on Heads and SLT and will improve the availability of performance management data.</td><td colspan="2">Utilise the HR system to embed effective performance management arrangements in schools.
To improve the onboarding of staff process.</td></tr>
</table>

2.5 Strategic Objective 5: Create the conditions for people to flourish and advance education for all, not just those in our Academies/Schools (civic duty)

- To grow the Trust in a measured way to ensure that standards are maintained and improved and that there is sufficient capacity to bring about rapid progress as required.
- To work collaboratively with strategic partners (Salford, Warrington, Trafford, Bury) to build capacity for the whole school system.
- To engage with opportunities to sponsor existing schools or deliver new schools/provisions to meet the needs of local communities.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Indicators of Success:</th></tr>
<tr><th>Year 1</th><th>Year 2</th><th>By Year 3</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Considered growth (to c. 8 schools) through new academy conversions, free schools, or mergers with existing MATs.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Any new schools quickly, smoothly, and effectively included within the Sovereign Trust systems securing immediate benefits from Trust membership.
Central team services are immediately scaled to accommodate any increase in demand.</td><td>Central team Services are at a scale to deliver strong service to all schools.</td></tr>
<tr><td>To review the current 16-19 provision with Salford LA to ensure the needs of the community are met.
Review the current 19 -25 provision with Trafford LA to ensure the community's needs are being met.</td><td colspan="2">The Trust works with LA's to address specific needs within its local communities.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Review current community offer across the Trust with a view to improving community use of the Trust's resources.</td><td>To identify groups who could benefit from the use of the Trust's resources to support the wider community.</td><td>Trust premises are used for the benefit of the local community.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">To work with other organisations to ensure that children can contribute to wider civic, creative, and cultural life. (cradle to career).</td></tr>
<tr><td>To continue to build capacity in the current schools within the Trust.
Completion of new classroom in Longford Park
Refurbishment of room for additional pupils Newpark
Additional form intake - Manor</td><td>To continue to build capacity in the current schools within the Trust.
Completion of second classroom Longford.</td><td>To continue to build capacity in the current schools within the Trust.</td></tr>
</table>

3. Our Academies

Longford Park School
Believe • Belong • Become

Ofsted Outstanding Provider

Is a 4-11 provision for children who have a range of learning difficulties and additional needs, which can sometimes manifest themselves in challenging behaviour. We offer structure and security through Teaching matched to the abilities of our pupils. Many of the pupils need to experience success and praise. We envelop the children in a 'can do' ethos and provide an environment where all embrace our school motto –

"Our children believe in themselves and belong in a strong community; everyone is empowered to become the best they can be."

Pupil numbers are 70, including some part-time places for those pupils in mainstream school who might need additional support for some weeks. Longford Park School was rated as Outstanding at the last Ofsted inspection in 2018.

Our staff nurtures through consistency. Our pupils flourish as they feel safe and valued. Rewards and praise feed throughout the school, from the morning greetings to the end of the week awards assembly. All pupils are nourished through breakfast clubs, therapeutic interventions, and curriculum opportunities. All carers and parents are involved in their children's education and communicate with them daily. We value education as the best way for children to thrive in the future, and we cultivate a moral compass to advance them upward through the rest of their lives.

Every individual is valued. Bullying is tackled; racism and every branch of equality are met head on with education. The staff act as role models and embrace the crucial role they can play in positively affecting the lives of the children we educate. From Head Teacher to caretaker, Parent Partner to cleaner, all are committed to cultivating opportunities for the pupils to show their positive colours. We instil pride in our children through enjoyment and achievement. We strive to give every child a leg up, so they can leave Longford Park School more at ease with themselves and more able to blossom in the future.

Manor ACADEMY

Succeeding Together

Is an 11-19 provision for children who have a range of learning difficulties and additional needs. We offer parents, carers, and their families a welcoming and supportive environment. Our highly skilled staff look to celebrate all the achievements of our pupils. Pupil numbers have risen to 175 this year with the addition of provision up to the age of 19 and a post-16 provision for young people with autism.

Manor Academy was graded 'Good' with praise for many Outstanding features at its last Ofsted inspection in 2018.

We believe at Manor Academy that everything should start with the young person. We aim to create a safe, happy environment where all pupils are valued. We offer a broad and balanced curriculum with a wealth of opportunities. This gives the pupils an enriching school experience and will help prepare them with skills for life in the wider community.

The curriculum at Manor Academy is broad, balanced, challenging, and engaging. It prepares students for the opportunities, responsibilities, and experiences they will encounter after leaving us while promoting spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental, and physical development.

Our curriculum is based on the National Curriculum and is broadly divided into a Key Stage 3 (Years 7-9), Key Stage 4 (Years 10 & 11), a Nurture curriculum, and Key Stage 5 (Years 12, 13, and 14) model. Our curriculum offers a very clear pathway for progression. All courses from Year 10 onwards lead to some sort, e.g. GCSE, BTEC, Level 1 and 2 qualifications, Entry Level Certificate, and Functional Skills.

Bridging the Gap programme in tandem with Manchester Metropolitan University offers our students a work placement that helps them develop their employability skills and gain on-the-job experience.

Pictor Academy caters for children aged 2 – 11 with special educational needs arising from a range of conditions. For example, many pupils have an autistic spectrum disorder. This means that they have difficulties communicating and interacting with others. They will also have difficulties with play and imagination. In addition, some of our pupils have physical difficulties, while others may have a language disorder or a general developmental delay.

All our pupils have difficulties accessing education and need to work in smaller class groups with a high level of specialist staff from Education, Speech and Language Therapy, Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, and the School Nursing Service.

We promote achievement for all and enjoyment in learning for life. We help each pupil to succeed through a challenging curriculum, innovative Teaching, and highly trained, experienced staff. In addition, we build effective and engaging learning partnerships between school and home. Pupil numbers usually stand at 120. At the last Ofsted inspection in 2019, Pictor was rated, for the third time, as Outstanding in all areas.

Each pupil at Pictor has an individual programme, including activities that are designed to encourage them to make good progress across all areas and achieve their full potential. Programmes include specialist approaches and resources to help them do this.

'Believe an Succeed'

New Park Academy is a special setting for pupils aged 7 to 16 who have been assessed as having social, emotional and/or mental health difficulties, often linked to other issues such as specific and/or moderate learning or communication difficulties. It was graded 'Good' in its latest OFSTED inspection in November 2022.

Pupil numbers have risen over the last couple of years and presently stand at 132 (PAN: 100) in response to the high demand for places in the local authority.

School recognises that their young people have often faced years of barriers to learning before they have been referred. School prides itself in seeing each child and young person as an individual and therefore looking for 'out of the box' solutions where needed: school needs to fit around the needs of the child – not the other way round! As a consequence, school has developed its thriving EOTAS programme that works with young people who do not manage education in any form of school setting for a wide range of reasons.

School offers the full curriculum adapted to the needs of the pupils, leading to a wide range of external qualifications from Entry Level to GCSE. A large number of teaching staff and teaching assistants are ELKLAN trained (a speech and language training programme). Holistic support includes interventions such as counselling, therapeutic play, therapeutic art, therapeutic baking, dog therapy, Lego therapy and nurture sessions.

4. Accountability

The Education Skills Funding Agency publishes the Academy Trust Handbook to outline the legal duties of all Multi Academy Trusts. The Handbook also details the legal duties of the statutory roles required in every MAT: The Chief Executive Officer ("accounting officer") and the Chief Finance Officer. In addition, the standards expected of all public services are set out in the Treasury's 'Managing Public Money' document. These standards are honesty, impartiality, openness, accountability, accuracy, fairness, integrity, transparency, objectivity and reliability carried out in the spirit of, as well as to the letter of, the law in the public interest to high ethical standards achieving value for money.

The Chief Executive Officer must be able to assure Parliament, and the public, of high standards of probity in the management of public funds, particularly:

- Value for money Regularity Propriety

The Chief Executive Officer must complete and sign a statement of compliance in these 3 areas each year and submit this to the Education Skills Funding Agency with the audited accounts of the Trust.

Value for money is a key concept. It means securing the best mix of quality and effectiveness for the least outlay for the use of the goods or services bought. It is not about minimising up-front prices. Whether in conventional procurement, market testing, private finance or some other form of public-private partnership, finding value for money involves an appropriate allocation of risk.

As we grow, we plan to use our resources on an affordable and sustainable path, within agreed limits. We will conduct procurement and project appraisal objectively and fairly, using cost-benefit analysis and seeking value for money. Finally, we will use management information systems to gain assurance about value for money and the quality of delivery and so make timely adjustment

As a strong Trust, we put the quality of education at the core of our mission. We have clearly articulated models of improvement across our schools that work alongside high-quality implementation and delivery.

Our core business is teaching and learning. Whilst effective and expert governance should be enabling of this, it is not in and of itself what we aspire to achieve. Better outcomes for children and young people are what we are all about. We are a specialist organisation focusing on running and improving schools and advancing education for public benefit.

Our MAT school improvement strategy details how we will be "relentless in pursuing ever-improving outcomes for all children."

Measuring & Managing Our Performance:

At the Trust level, the performance priorities are constantly under review, and challenges have been determined because we believe they are the 4 performance indicators which give us the clearest line-of-sight on the quality of education in our schools:

All children are making at least the expected progress from their individual starting points, with over 90% achieving the targets set;

- 100% of Teaching is assessed as being at least "Good";
- Pupil attendance is in line with the national average or higher, considering the challenges of their special educational needs
- All pupils achieve a positive post-school transition.

The Board of Directors meets at least 3 times per year and holds the Trust Executive to account. The Trust also has a Finance, Risk & Audit Committee, which meets at least 3 times yearly. In addition, each school has an Academy Advisory Committee (AAC), which meets 3 times per year.

Academy Advisory Committees have delegated responsibilities from the Trust Board and are the eyes and ears of the governance of a school. AAC's have a Chair and Vice Chair and have responsibility for Teaching and Learning, Pupil progress, Curriculum, Safeguarding, and Daily management of their school.