

Transforming Life Chances

TRUST DEVELOPMENT PLAN 24/25

STRONG POLICIES, STRONG LEADERS, STRONG SERVICES



THINKING SCHOOLS
ACADEMY TRUST



OUR VISION AT THINKING SCHOOLS ACADEMY TRUST

Every young person in our community deserves to have the best opportunities at life regardless of their individual circumstances.

Education is the key to accessing these opportunities and we support and develop every member of our community to:

- **Think about their Thinking**
- **Be their Best Self**
- **Shape their Success**

In this way Thinking Schools Academy Trust Transforms Life Chances.

OUR VALUES

Child First

To provide a stimulating learning environment for all where learners feel safe to explore knowledge and understanding.

Aspire

To be the best they can be. We believe that all staff and pupils can aspire for personal and professional prowess and become empowered through the 'Thinking' philosophy.

Challenge

To actively shape the minds, attitudes and habits of young people through a framework of cognitive education that enables them to become the master of their own destiny.

Achieve

For all stakeholders to demonstrate the highest levels of thinking and habits. We want our pupils to be questioning in nature, achieving the highest levels of independent and interdependent prowess.



REFLECTIONS FROM STUART GARDNER

ACADEMIC YEAR 2023-24

It is amazing to reflect that when I became CEO in 2016, we were a Trust serving less than 6,500 students; today, we span the South Coast of England and serve over 16,500 students across all types of educational settings. This year we have been able to secure our South West Hub with the onboarding of Paignton, Curledge Street and Kings Ash. It is important, however, to appreciate that "size isn't everything," and we continue to be the only significant sized multi-academy trust to embrace metacognition through our work with Exeter University and their Thinking Accreditation programme.

I remain very proud that we are the only multi-academy trust committed to metacognition with 16 accredited schools. It was wonderful to visit Furzeham in the last few weeks of the academic year and meet their student thinking team. They talked to me about all the thinking tools they used and made it very clear that this was a better way of learning. The school also received their formal thinking accreditation at the end of term, which is excellent news. They have joined Maritime Academy, Moorings Way Infant School and Meon Infant School who also gained their thinking accreditations this year.

One of our greatest collective successes this year has been achieving our accreditation as Investors in People and Investors in Wellbeing. I have said it before, a school is only as good as its staff and this is as true for us as a Trust. Therefore, I am delighted that, as an organisation, we are focusing on ensuring we treat our staff as well as possible and cultivating a workplace culture grounded in principles and practices that empower individuals, fostering continuous improvement and wellbeing. I know we are continuing this work in the coming years and I look forward to working with you on making Thinking Schools Academy Trust the Trust of Choice for people to work in.

As part of this focus on being the best organisation for our staff to work in, we are committed to ensuring that people are supported to be their best selves. To support this across our regions, over 40 Trust coaches recently completed the BASIC Coaching program. This initiative aims to support colleagues in various aspects of their work by developing strong coaching skills. Additionally, over 20 service leaders completed our outstanding Central Service Leadership programme, where they enhanced their skills sets and graduated with new confidence to lead their service specialisms and inspire their teams.

I also want to acknowledge our newest WeAreOne event, World Earth Day. Chosen by our student council, schools put on their green hats and created fantastic banners promoting the reduction of plastic usage. And finally, our much-anticipated TSArTs week needs no introduction. Students, staff, and contractors all participated in the Trust Got Talent entries, making it a truly spectacular event that leaves a positive impression on all.

This year, student voice has been a key focus for us. We saw how our own young people can make a difference. The Trust student council has provided the Board and Executive Team with some very useful feedback over the course of the year, and our Deputy CEO, Lee Miller, has been so impressed with the student contributions that he has decided to include the student panel in the new catering contract tendering process next year.

I want to recognise the outstanding work and support dedicated to our brand-new Maritime Academy build. The progress has been truly impressive, not only in terms of speed, but also in terms of the expertise demonstrated by our services in preparing the school for its September 2024 opening. Both students and staff are excited, and I want to thank those who will finish the project over the summer.

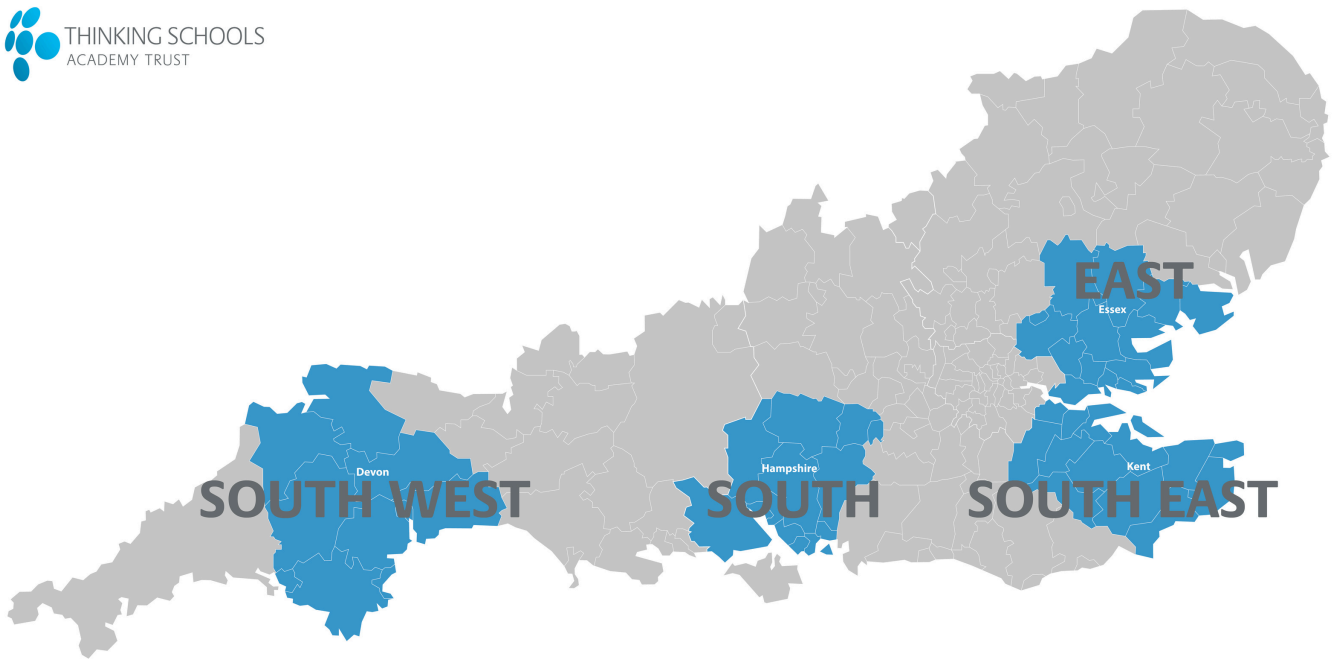
Finally, I would like to thank everyone who has supported me personally this year. Juggling being Ofsted accountable at The Portsmouth Academy for a couple of terms while also continuing to lead the Trust required a great deal of mental dexterity, switching between the horizons of leading a single school and the leadership of a Trust of 26 schools. However, the staff at The Portsmouth Academy were very welcoming, and it was great to be working much more closely with students. Furthermore, the wider support and understanding of the Executive Team and the Trust ensured that we were able to continue to make the progress we wanted to make across the organisation.

As we end the academic year we have a new government and we await to see what that means for the sector going forward. But whatever the changes and challenges, I know that as a Trust we will meet these and ensure we continue to do the right thing for our students.

OUR FOCUS

ACADEMIC YEAR 2024/2025

Our Trust now has 26 schools, supporting over 16,500 pupils across three regions. We are fortunate to have a wide range of schools in our Trust, including all phases of education from Nursery to our Sixth Form provision, this is a huge asset to our organisation as we grow our networks across all regions.



SOUTH WEST



SOUTH



SOUTH EAST



EAST





**26
ACADEMIES**

**16,500
STUDENTS**

**2,500
STAFF**

**STRONGER
TOGETHER**

OUR FOCUS

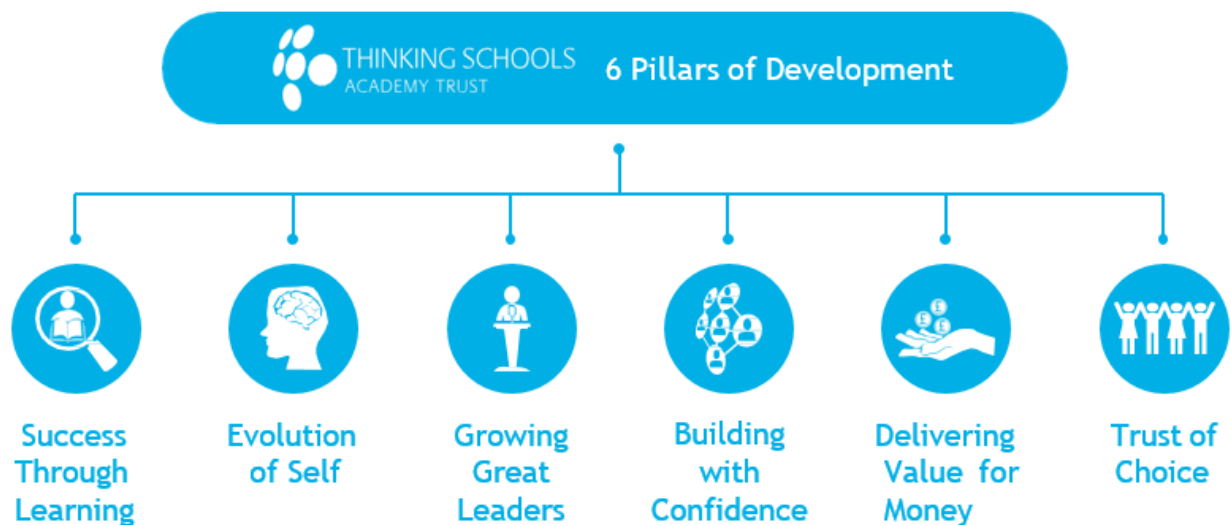
ACADEMIC YEAR 2024/2025

As we move forward, the Board have agreed that within the current financial context the Trust needs to adjust its way of working. Therefore 2024/25 is a year of transition to this new model.

The ambition is to create strong effective schools, united by a common belief in Transforming Life Chances of children through the application of a metacognitive approach to education. We aim to develop a Trust culture built on the foundations of strong policies, strong leaders and strong services.

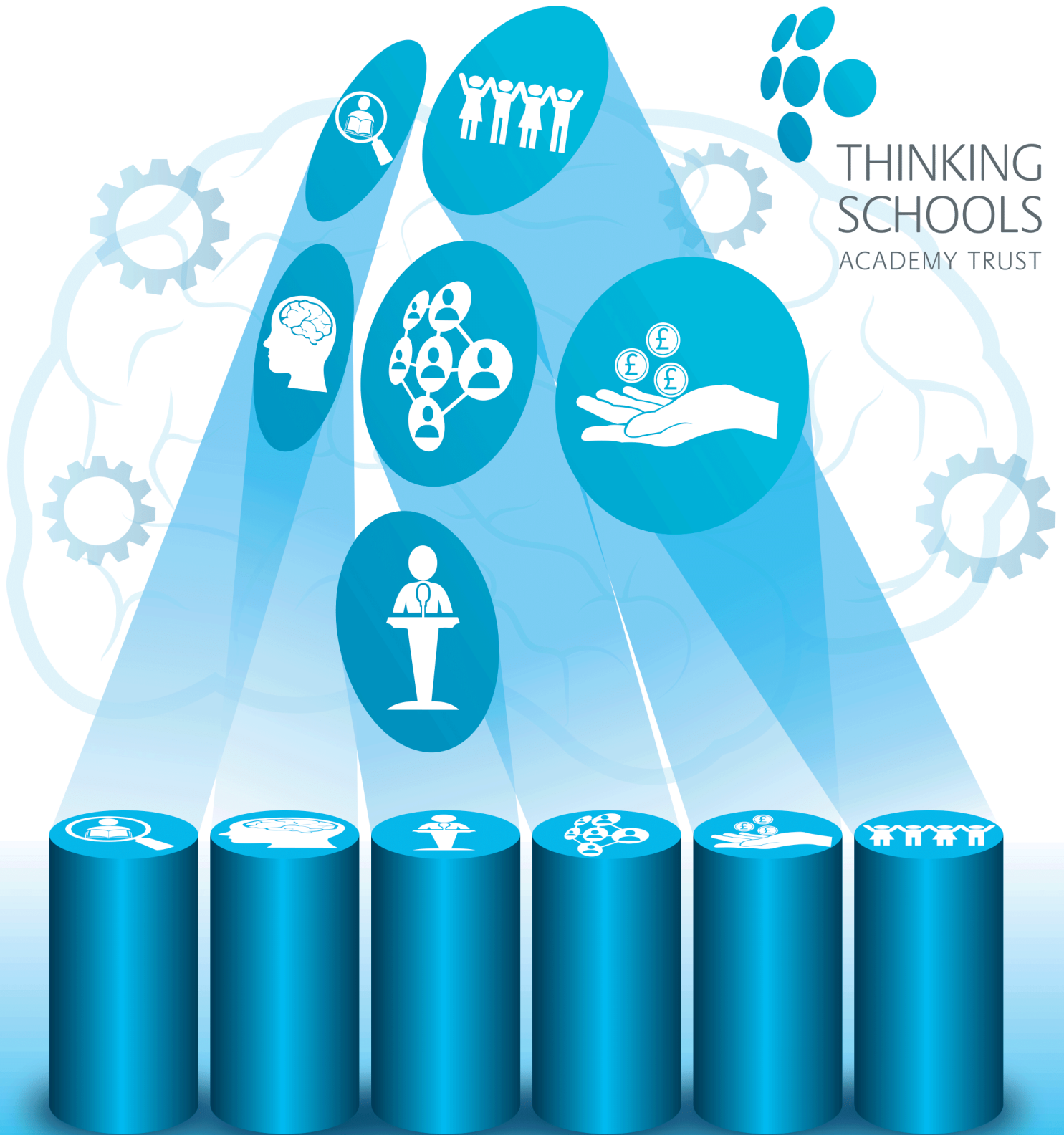
This plan shares with you some of the activities that will be led across Our Trust to promote these priorities.

The plan is separated into Our Six Pillars as illustrated below:





THINKING
SCHOOLS
ACADEMY TRUST



Success
through
learning



Evolution
of self



Growing
great
leaders



Building
with
confidence



Delivering
value for
money



Trust
of choice

Transforming Life Chances



PILLAR 1 - SUCCESS THROUGH LEARNING

2023-2024 ACHIEVEMENTS

- Three schools gained their first Thinking Accreditation – Maritime Academy, Meon Infant School, Moorings Way Infant School, and Furzeham Primary and Nursery School. Thinking was also a key part of the onboarding process for new schools.
- Curriculum Leader Meetings have taken place and some subjects have made significant progress in their collaborative work.
- Phonics improved, closing the gap between Trust and National results.
- KS2 results improved significantly. Trust results were better than National in Reading and Maths and at National for combined.
- The Intranet is ready for launch in September 2024 and the Trust's 5 year digital strategy is in place.

2024-2025 PRIORITIES

Strong Policies

- Application of KS4 Curriculum and Outcomes policy – to improve outcomes.
- Planning the use of directed time to deliver outcomes – ready for application for Sept 2025.
- Application of existing Trust strategies and planning of further strategies to raise school attendance and support for vulnerable students.

Strong Leaders

- Planning and applying strategies to create and develop a culture of attainment and progress to transform life chances by improving outcomes in our schools.

Strong Services

- Apply the Digital Learning and Technology Strategy to create a positive impact from the investment.

OUR FUTURE AMBITIONS

- To have embedded meeting and peer support networks across all levels of our organisation, including school leaders, senior leaders, middle leaders, subject leaders and support staff leaders. In this way all our staff have access to best practice and support to ensure the best possible provision in all our schools.
- To have policies that define Trust expectations of performance, outline the core ways of working all schools will engage with and the enhanced toolkit that schools can use as a safety net, supported by the Trust when they are not performing as expected.
- For our teachers to be experts in the pedagogy of knowledge acquisition so that our students have the knowledge they need to be successful in their public examinations/assessments.
- For all of our schools to use technology as effectively as possible to support student progress and development.



Delivering success through learning by providing a great curriculum and teaching to remember.



PILLAR 2 - EVOLUTION OF SELF

2023-2024 ACHIEVEMENTS

- Our first Alternative Provision setting, Lodestar Academy, joined us in September 2023 and were subsequently graded 'Good' with Trust support, following years of being graded as 'Requires Improvement'.
- We now have over 40 coaches across our organisation supporting all our staff to Be their Best Selves.
- Our Be Your Best Self Journals continue to evolve and improve so that schools can create their bespoke journals.

2024-2025 PRIORITIES

Strong Leaders

- Plan and apply next steps in developing our coaching culture.

OUR FUTURE AMBITIONS

- To become experts in supporting young people to reflect on themselves including having the ability to recognise how they want to develop, and the knowledge to successfully make these changes to and for themselves.
- To fully embed our Professional Growth Strategy to ensure that it positively impacts all of our staff to become their best personal and professional selves.
- To have an embedded culture of continuous improvement through a culture of reflection and coaching.



We promote a culture of self-improvement and provide Thinking Tools to support our students and staff to become their best selves.



PILLAR 3 - GROWING GREAT LEADERS

2023-2024 ACHIEVEMENTS

- Highly successful Trust conference and MAT meets.
- Successfully achieved Investors in People and Investors in Wellbeing award.
- Welbee survey showed significant improvements in staff wellbeing across the Trust.
- Developed process of continuous reflection on Professional Growth Targets.

2024-2025 PRIORITIES

Strong Leaders

- Applying Year 1 of People Strategy and tethering the commitments made as part of our 'Investors in People' accreditation.
- Apply the TSAT 4.0 operational model to empower school leaders to run effective and sustainable schools within the Trust framework.

OUR FUTURE AMBITIONS

- To develop our Quality Assurance and Leadership development programme through talent management to successfully develop our current and future leaders.
- For all our staff to be empowered to control their own professional development journey.
- For all our staff to use the Professional Growth Framework to be on a conscious journey of improvement to be their best selves.
- To have our work recognised through further improvements in our the Investors in People and Wellbeing Awards.



Enabling staff to access high-quality, personalised CPD opportunities that ensure they are supported in achieving their career aspirations.



PILLAR 4 - BUILDING WITH CONFIDENCE

2023-2024 ACHIEVEMENTS

- We have successfully worked to be able to transfer to the new Maritime Academy site in September 2024.
- We have welcomed and successfully onboarded Lodestar Academy, Paignton Academy, Curledge Street Academy and Kings Ash Academy into our Trust.
- The Trust Education Drive Team has successfully supported our schools, especially The Portsmouth Academy.
- We have successfully created a new governance framework with powers being further delegated to local governing bodies ready for transition from September 2024.
- We have developed Academy Review documentation to capture and report school data.
- We have launched the use of heatmaps for reflection and reporting.

2024-2025 PRIORITIES

Strong Policies

- Planning of trust-wide policies including reading/literacy, SEND, teaching, learning and behaviour for application from Sept 2025
- Planning and applying strategies to make data effective, reviewing MIS pilot at Maritime and planning the move to Trust wide MIS

Strong Services

- Complete the tender for and apply the new HR / payroll system to enhance the service provided to staff.
- Plan our future capital sustainability strategy to meet stakeholder expectations.

OUR FUTURE AMBITIONS

- To have effective data reporting, governance systems and Trust structures to allow for timely and effective strategic support, challenge and oversight.
- To have key data available in real time for school and Trust leaders.
- To have an embedded model of Academy Review that effectively supports, challenges and monitors schools to ensure rapid improvement over time.
- To have efficient systems and processes that support effective onboarding of new schools into our Trust.
- To have clear Quality Assurance processes that recognises that because of our empowerment model, it is essential that the schools and governors have assurances that the approaches taken by individual schools, is having the intended impact on student educational experiences.
- To maximise the value of our Single Central Network and the Intranet so that our staff can work collaboratively to reduce workload and easily share best practice for the benefit of all our students.



Through the effective use of professional development, quality assurance, and data analysis, we work to ensure we know our schools and provide the support they need to be their best.



PILLAR 5 - DELIVERING VALUE FOR MONEY

2023-2024 ACHIEVEMENTS

- The cost per pupil model is in place and being reported to demonstrate value for money from our services.
- Thinking Solutions for Education continues to expand its external work and generate additional income for our Trust.
- Significant work has been done to plan what changes are required to enable our Trust to continue to be financially viable in the current financial context.

2024-2025 PRIORITIES

Strong Services

- Plan the commercial strategy for TSfE to enhance the value for money for our schools.
- Plan and apply processes to allow greater student voice as a key performance indicator and input into choosing new catering contract and monitoring it once in place.

OUR FUTURE AMBITIONS

- To further develop the reputation and commercial orientation of Thinking Solutions for Education (TSfE) to become a market leader in the provision of school services.
- For all leaders in our organisation to recognise that TSfE delivers outstanding services at outstanding value for money through the effective use of review processes and cost per pupil modelling.
- For Our Trust to continue to be financially robust and resilient.
- For our income generation activities to provide maximum value back to the organisation and our schools.



Showing a commitment to delivering value for money, ensuring the right services are provided in the right way, at the right cost.



PILLAR 6 - TRUST OF CHOICE

2023-2024 ACHIEVEMENTS

- We have established our middle leader meeting structure with some middle leader groups really emerging as strong communities for sharing best practice.
- Our Trust conference and MAT meets continue to receive very positive feedback.
- We have successfully achieved the Investors in People and Investors in Wellbeing Awards.
- We have improved staff retention this year and are fully staffed for September which is a major achievement in the current recruitment market.
- We have had significant improvement in our Welbee survey responses and feedback.

2024-2025 PRIORITIES

Strong Services

- Plan and apply the first stage of effective use of the intranet to improve internal communications

OUR FUTURE AMBITIONS

- To create and embed a culture of appreciation and recognition in our organisation that supports the wellbeing of all members of our community.
- To have a Trust in which colleagues can easily access timely support when required.
- To be a Trust that staff want to join and remain part of through their career.
- To be recognised by parents as a trusted organisation focused on delivering the best for their children.
- To be the Trust of Choice for schools committed to the use of metacognition.
- Continue to support all our schools to achieve Artsmark Accreditation - demonstrating our Trust's commitment to cultural and creative education and its positive impact on our young people.



By supporting our schools, students, and staff to be their best selves and celebrating our collective achievements, we aspire to be the Trust of choice for parents choosing a school for their child and for staff considering the next step in their career.

Transforming Life Chances

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