

Stronger Together

North Star Community Trust



NORTH STAR
COMMUNITY TRUST



North Star Community Trust: Stronger Together

Foreword from the Chair of Board

As we mark a decade of running local schools as an educational charity at the very heart of the community in Edmonton, there is much that we can celebrate and be very proud of at North Star Community Trust.

Now is the right time for the Trust to look ahead and to outline a new road map to ensure the future success of our schools over the next three years.

The challenges ahead are significant for everyone involved in education. But the power of education to transform lives is unquestionable and this is what motivates our Trustees. Everything we do is for children.

What will we do over the next three years?

We plan to build on the strong culture we have developed and our track record of success, shaping a new strategy to deliver on our overarching mission to improve life chances.

We also want our children to have lifelong memories of the happy times they had with us, developing a love of learning, and remembering their teachers with fondness and as the role models who inspired them to reach for their dreams. Addressing children's whole needs while they are with us at such a key stage of their development – intellectual, emotional and physical - is critical. All children have gifts and we want them to achieve their full potential. Our role is to be bridge builders to opportunity. Excellence through equity is our goal.

We must continue to have the support of our parents in everything that we do. This partnership is fundamental to our success. Studies frequently show that 50% of a child's achievement is influenced by their parents. We will also enhance our efforts to work with parents to encourage vital learning outside of the classroom and to ensure the current high standards of behaviour of children that are so important to a good education are maintained and strengthened.

This document sets out in detail some of our high-level objectives and priorities.

These include developing a new, broad, empowering and creative curriculum in each school, achieving year on year improvements in outcomes, and being recognised as a leading Trust in preparing its young people to be citizens of the future. We set out how being part of a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) adds value and means that as a direct result of our working together we are stronger as a group of academies than as individual schools. We get better at what we do through our collaboration.

As a result of being stronger together, we are creating Trust-wide pledges to every child, parent and member of staff. The document highlights our pledges to parents about the types of activities and experiences their children will have an opportunity to take part in while they are at one of our schools. There are also pledges to our staff and our community partners.

Dr Donald Graham Chair, Board of Trustees

Welcome from the Chief Executive Officer

With renewed leadership, with renewed focus, and with a renewed vision for the future, we are planning ahead to ensure that every child and young person within our schools can thrive, both today and in the future.

Our community sits at the heart of all we do. It is through people – pupils, staff, parents and others across the communities we serve – that we will all thrive, together. This document sets out where we are going, and how we can work together to make our Trust a great place both to learn and work.

You will be able to learn more about:

- Our mission, vision, values and culture
- Our pledges to our children, communities and staff
- Our schools
- Our development plans
- A summary of our strategic activities

The trust is moving forward with a commitment to being **stronger together**, and I hope you enjoy reading about our work and our plans in the pages ahead.

Marino Charalambous

Chief Executive Officer, North Star Community Trust

– Our mission, vision, values and culture

As partners in our community, our mission is to provide every child and young person with an enriching and inspiring educational experience, where they can thrive academically and socially, both now and in the future. By being 'Stronger Together' in our educational quality, our parent and community engagement, our investment in our people and our sustainability, we can meet our specific pledges to all of our children, communities and staff.

Our vision is to prepare every North Star Community Trust student for the changing world we live in. A world which is more global, more driven by technology, a world where anything is possible with the right preparation and attitude. That means providing a curriculum and learning experience that reflects the highest academic standards and inspires and enthuses pupils through its creativity and openness to the world around us. Our children will be able to 'be the change they want to see in the world'. They will be resilient, optimistic, respectful, honest and well-rounded citizens, with a love of learning.

At the same time, we are all also members of our communities, places where we find friendship, support and common endeavour. Being at the heart of our communities is a hallmark of North Star Community Trust schools. We want our children and young people to have a sense of place, knowing the importance of 'giving back' and the value of community and togetherness to their everyday lives. As a trust, we will foster a culture that respects diversity and recognises that we are stronger together than we are apart.

In pursuing this vision, trustees, staff and governors will model it every day, knowing that each one of us plays a part in making it a reality for every child and young person.

– Our pledges to children:

- All of our children will have the opportunity to become highly educated, active and wellrounded citizens, whose talents and personal qualities will be nurtured;
- Our children will have the opportunity to develop a love of learning, as well as excellent knowledge and skills, preparing them for a world which is changing due especially to technology and globalisation;
- A curriculum and learning experience that is inclusive, inspiring, open to the wider world and which encourages creativity and resilience;
- A trust and schools that are at the heart of their communities, providing children with a sense of place and with relationships which are built on care, inclusivity, respect and trust; Schools that are full of role models – pupils, staff and governors who care deeply and are inspirational in equal measure.

Our pledges to our school communities:

- Our Trust will ensure that each school will always be led by exceptional educationalists with a strong-track record of leading within high-performing schools;
- Our Trust will foster a community of schools committed to supporting one another's improvement and success; with expert teachers working together – across schools - to enhance the curriculum, teaching and learning, professional development, and much more;
- Our Trust will provide the highest standards of safeguarding support, ensuring all pupils and staff are safe and secure;
- Our Trust will provide high quality mental health and wellbeing support, ensuring that children and young people are supported with care and are ready to learn;

- Our Trust will provide high quality and ethical governance at all levels, providing schools with the necessary balance of support and challenge in order for them to succeed;
- Our Trust will foster a range of key relationships with external agencies and organisations, including those across our communities, who can contribute to our efforts to ensure every child and school thrives;
- Our Trust will work in partnership to improve educational, employment and social opportunities for parents, carers and others in our wider school community.

Our pledges to our staff:

- Our Trust will be a caring, meaningful place to work and learn, a place to be proud of, with every member of staff playing their part in our vision - to provide every child with an enriching and inspirational educational experience;
- Our Trust will support every member of staff in their career development, working with each individual to understand their hopes and aspirations for the future;
- Our Trust will provide professional development opportunities and support of the highest standard, drawing on experts within and beyond our Trust;
- Our Trust will be committed to ensuring workload is fair and manageable, drawing on our professional community to share resources and planning wherever possible;
- Our Trust will support staff to maintain a healthy work life balance, recognising that our staff are also parents, carers and people with wider interests and responsibilities.

— Our schools

Schools across our Trust share a common vision, collaborate with each other so that they are stronger together, whilst respecting each school's individual context.

Woodpecker Hall Academy – Edmonton

A four-form entry primary academy serving pupils from Nursery to Year 6.

The headteacher is Ms Nicky Ross

“We aspire to provide a curriculum and learning experience that inspires pupils – we want every child to be engaged, inquisitive, and life-long learners. The Trust-wide curriculum principles will make sure this is our shared focus.” Nicky Ross

Enfield Heights Academy – Enfield

A one-form entry primary academy currently serving pupils from Reception through to Year 6.

The head of school is Mrs Justyna Powrie

“Being part of a family of schools is exciting and empowering, as we can learn from each other, while at the same time retaining a good level of autonomy. Shared central services keep costs down and we are able to buy in bulk with the purchasing power of a Trust.” Jade Simone-Bacon

Kingfisher Hall Academy - Enfield

A two-form entry primary academy serving pupils from Nursery through to Year 6.

The headteacher is Ms Gemma Vincent

“Being part of North Star is a huge opportunity for schools to support one another, to share what they do well, and to work together to share our very best practice to the benefit of every child in the Trust. We’re all committed to that.” Matthew Clifford

Heron Hall Academy – Ponders End

A new and growing secondary school, serving pupils from Years 7 through to 11.

The headteacher is Mr Arthur Barzey

*“Many of our students come from the Trust’s primary schools, which means we know a great deal about them when they join us. Our mission and purpose is clear and supported by all our staff. The Trust approach is having a transformational impact on the lives of these young people.”
Arthur Barzey*

Our Development Plans

We will fulfil our pledges to our pupils, students, staff and communities, in line with our values and culture, through our development plan which is based on 5 Trust-wide themes:

1. Preparing students for the future
2. Schools at the heart of their communities
3. An employer of choice for our staff
4. High quality leadership
5. A sustainable Trust

Theme 1: Preparing students for the future

We will prepare students for the future by achieving four objectives:

- a. In partnership with parents, ensuring students are ready to learn
- b. Enriching and inspiring teaching, learning and curriculum
- c. Future-focused learning experiences
- d. Providing an education in the roundest sense.

1.a In partnership with parents, ensuring pupils are safe and ready to learn

To be able to learn and seize the opportunities that education brings, children must feel safe, secure and able to overcome any worries and anxieties they may have. Many of our children live challenging lives, and it is important that we help them in managing the pressures and uncertainties so that they too may flourish.

Our pupils and students will be provided with every opportunity to learn. Our schools will give every child the chance to take advantage of what school has to offer. Our partnership with parents is critical to achieving this. Through the Home School Agreement, we also set out our expectations of parents so that their children are capable of taking advantage of this promise.

Through our Community Outreach service, we will help to empower parents to help their children through workshops and courses to enhance parenting skills and

One of the defining features of the Trust is our commitment to high quality safeguarding and mental health services.

Safeguarding is the responsibility of every member of staff across the Trust. We believe that safeguarding our pupils is about prevention – and this means knowing our children and their families well, building a culture of trust – where people can talk, and always being on the look out for concerning signs. We are stronger together when it comes to safeguarding our children.

The work of our staff and schools in this area is underpinned by the Trust's high-quality safeguarding services, led by Zoe Kirby – a highly experienced safeguarding and child protection professional. Our schools receive day to day support, including induction training, the maintenance of records, site security surveys, and regular training resources. Zoe and her team ensure that our schools are doing all that they can possibly do to protect and support our pupils, not least by maintain good relationships with parents and engaging with them from an early stage.

“Relationships built on trust – with children, with parents, with other agencies, and with the community – underpin safeguarding. We spend time investing in those relationships, listening to others and working with a sense of partnership.” Zoe Kirby, Head of Safeguarding

Our Safeguarding team are also at the heart of our communities. We work with two charities – Dazu, a charity that supports young carers; and Family Based Solutions (formerly known as PAARS) – a charity that helps to repair relationships between children and their parents and carers. By working with these partners, we are often able to ensure our children and young people, and their families receive the support they need. The team also have strong relationships with the police, health care, and social care bodies.

Our community outreach work, undertaken in partnership with Save The Children, also plays an important part in ensuring children are safe and secure.

Mental health support is also an important element of our work here. Again, we strive to know our children well and to be able to spot signs that they are struggling or anxious. Our schools benefit from the time and expertise of four professional counsellors, who each serve one of our schools within the Trust. This means that our teachers and support staff are able to signpost any child that needs it to a person who can help them. Our Trust is proud of its partnership with ‘Place 2 Be’, the national charity dedicated to supporting schools to improve mental health provision.

Additional support is provided by a Trust-wide staff who lead on medical and health issues facing our pupils, and an Education Welfare Officer, who supports schools improving absence and overcoming lateness.

Working in partnership with parents and carers, our schools will support all our students to be organised, develop literacy and numeracy to the appropriate level, have places to learn, play and be safe inside and outside school.

1.b Enriching and inspiring teaching, learning and curriculum

Over the last two to three years we have focused relentlessly on improving the quality of teaching and learning across our schools. In doing so we have built partnerships with other local schools – including high-performing schools – beyond our Trust and developed our partnership with Enfield

School Improvement Services. Our headteachers have taken this work to another level, bringing a strong-track record in the leadership of teaching and learning.

In improving teaching and learning in our schools, we have so far focused on the following areas:

- Developing expert subject knowledge
- More alignment with the national curriculum
- Ensuring high-quality planning
- Effective use of teaching assistants -
Better formative assessment for learning.
Improvements in teaching pupils with SEN

These areas of focus have ensured that our teachers are better supported and better prepared to help all children to thrive, and we are delighted with the improvements so far. Things are moving in the right direction. However, there is more to do to seize the opportunities that being in a trust presents, and in the next 18 months we will:

- Created a shared-resources pool to enable teachers to collaborate around, share and refine resources together. This will reduce workload and lead to further improvements in planning and lesson resources;
- Shape a shared *approach* to the primary curriculum, based on three principles: Enquirybased learning; Sustainability; and Equality of Opportunity. These principles will guide the curriculum, providing our schools with autonomy to design a curriculum that inspires and enthuses their children, whilst also being a basis for collaboration and learning across our schools;
- Develop a deeper culture of learning across the Trust where children are increasingly able to think for themselves and become self-motivated learners;
- Build our external links with subject associations and the Chartered College for Teachers, ensuring that our teachers have access to the latest research and professional development opportunities these links afford;

Teaching and learning across the Trust will be defined by:

- Providing a rich and relevant learning experience, delivered by expert teachers
- Knowing the strengths and weaknesses of every child; and acting upon this knowledge to serve all children and young people
- Enthusing a life-long love of learning
- Raising aspirations and self-belief
- Ensuring all children are achieving the best outcomes possible

1.c Future-focused learning experiences

We want the educational experience of all our pupils to be one that raises aspirations and self-belief, and enthuses children to become life-long learners. This means ensuring learning is relevant and fun. It also means learning from the past as well to help inform how we study the future.

The world is changing and we know that literacy and numeracy, whilst being an essential bedrock of education and learning, and the right of every child, are only the beginning. Children and young people are moving into a world where creativity, innovation and the STEM subjects generally are going to be at a premium. Indeed, Price Waterhouse Coopers recently found that, in preparing for tomorrow's workforce, schools should be "*focusing more on STEM subjects (science, technology,*

engineering and mathematics), but also exploring how art and design can feature at the heart of innovation (as is being pioneered by the 'STEAM' movement, where 'A' represents 'Art and design')."

STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths)

We want all our pupils to be inspired by STEM subjects. Recent DfE research found that girls enjoy STEM subjects less than boys: the proportion of male pupils who ranked KS4 STEM subjects first for enjoyment was almost twice that for females: 59% vs. 32%. That needs to change.

At North Star Community Trust we are committed to developing a rich and inspiring STEM curriculum, with every child in every school benefiting from a continuous curriculum that will run from age 4 to 16. This curriculum will be developed by expert staff, working in partnership with wider STEM associations and employers. This will ensure a guaranteed quality of learning for all our pupils, and the ability for our schools to share resources (including specialist staff) between them and to access wider links beyond the Trust through CHAT's partnerships.

Our curriculum will also prize subjects that encourage creativity – not least the arts.

1.d Education in the roundest sense

Education should be about shaping memories that last a lifetime. Whilst we need to ensure our children and young people leave school with the knowledge and qualifications they need and deserve, we also want them to have developed 'skills for life', with the confidence, resilience, and social skills that will enable them to thrive in the years to come. Many of our pupils come from challenging circumstances, and it is important that we give them a window to the wider world and inspire them with new opportunities and experiences.

All our children will have ample and regular opportunities to play team sports and games, to take part in performances, and to work together on creative projects. These opportunities will ensure they can each develop a strong sense of participation and collaboration, as well as a love for social activities that contribute to better physical and mental wellbeing.

At North Star Community Trust we are committed to ensuring every child can access a range of important early-life experiences before they reach the age of sixteen. Our *North Star Pledges* will include a range of fantastic opportunities for all pupils. Our schools will be able to choose from a list that includes:

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- Speaking in front of an audience
- Visiting another city
- Playing a musical instrument
- Participating in unusual sporting activities: wall climbing, golf, an equestrian centre
- Creating a work of art for public display beyond our schools
- Visiting a university
- Taking part in a programme of motivation and inspiration
- Taking part in a technology project
- Walking in the countryside
- Spending a night under the stars
- Getting to know Shakespeare
- Making a 3 course meal

- Volunteering in their local community, as part of a group of individually
- Visiting a creative industry: theatre, film studio, gallery, museum
- Visiting a leading corporate business organisation: bank, law firm, consultancy
- Visiting the Houses of Parliament, Greater London Assembly, or Enfield Council chamber

Staff across our schools will share their practice, resources, partnerships and experience to help us to shape the North Star Pledge, working together to create inspiring experiences for all pupils.

Theme 2: Schools at the heart of their communities

Our children and young people are growing up in a complex world. At North Star, we know how important it is to build relationships both within our communities and beyond in order to best prepare children and young people for the future.

We will ensure our schools play a vital role at the heart of their communities by achieving the following objectives:

- a. High quality and free support for parents and parenting
- b. Responding to the needs of our community, respecting diversity
- c. Working with a range of selected local and national partners

2a: High quality support for parents and parenting

Our most important partners are parents. It is parents who have the greatest influence on children and young people's lives. We know how important it is that they have access to the support, advice and relationships they need to ensure their child thrives.

Our Community Outreach service, which has received national praise, has been developed to provide a range of opportunities for parents to engage with our schools and school-life; not least through numerous free courses to support parents in pursuing job applications, developing skills for the workplace, parenting support, and developing technology skills.

We have worked in partnership with Save the Children to deliver the Families and Schools Together partnership. This partnership has offered a number of opportunities for parents, including parenting classes and participation in after-school clubs; with excellent feedback from parents and noticeable improvements in pupil outcomes. Many of our parents, grandparents, and other family members have developed the skills and confidence to not only secure their own employment, but also to contribute to the life and work of our schools through volunteerism. We wish to build on this in the years ahead.

The Trust is committed to further developing and embedding our Community Outreach services, working across all schools to build on the impact of our work with Save the Children and elsewhere.

2b: Effective working with community partners

Within our communities, we are committed to working with:

- Charities that serve children and young people
- Local employers. This is also strong within our secondary school, and there is an opportunity to extend these relationships to our primary schools
- Local sports clubs – including football and cricket clubs
- Further and Higher education institutions -
- Community leaders
- Health and social care services, and police

Our Trust Board is committed to being at the forefront of these partnerships, with trustees supporting the community outreach programme with their experience, advice and contacts. They review the progress and relationships with key partners and provide the strategic steer to enhance the reach of the work undertaken by the team.

We also strongly believe in the power of volunteerism, and, as part of our commitment to being a trust at the heart of its community, we will seek to develop a bank of professionally managed volunteers with a wide range of skills, who can bring their valuable time and skills to the life of the Trust.

2c: Working with partners

Beyond our immediate communities, we are committed to working with groups, including:

- Chartered College of Teaching
- Sport England
- Curriculum subject associations
- Place2Be
- Save The Children
- Youth Sport Trust

Our partnerships will closely reflect our vision for education and children and young people, prioritising high quality leadership and teaching in our schools, the mental and physical wellbeing of pupils, the need to prepare children for a rapidly changing jobs market, and successfully managing the impact of technology on children's lives.

Theme 3: An employer of choice for our staff

We want every child in every school to benefit from the most talented, knowledgeable and inspiring teachers. We also want our pupils to receive the highest standards of support and care from our other staff. That means building a workplace culture that attracts and retains great people. We will ensure that North Star is an employer of choice through achieving 4 objectives: Providing an environment for meaningful work; Career pathways and professional development; Professional communities and shared resources; Promote flexible approaches to working wherever possible. We will communicate the benefits of working for us through having a strong North Star Community Trust brand and active websites and social media platforms.

3a: Providing an environment for meaningful work

We believe every member of staff has an important role to play in shaping our organisation and helping it to flourish – to the benefit of children and young people. We will recognise the talents, skills and experiences of all our staff so that we can draw on these to contribute to the development of our Trust and schools. That means knowing our staff well, understanding their hopes, ambitions and passions, and recognising ways in which they can contribute to making our Trust a great place to work and learn.

We will work together as one North Star Community Trust team to shape the environment and culture in our schools, and support each other to gain intrinsic reward from the work we do with young people, with each other and with our communities. We will conduct a staff survey to ensure that we are engaging our people in the best way, and to continually improve how we do this.

3b: Career pathways and professional development

Our Trust will support every member of staff in their career development, working with each individual to understand their hopes and aspirations for the future. Our Trust will provide

professional development opportunities and support of the highest standards, drawing on experts within and beyond our Trust.

Every member of staff will have a 'professional development pathway'. Managers will help staff to clarify their goals over the next few years, and to identify professional development opportunities that will help them to get there. In the spirit of community and openness, we will also encourage all staff to make a link with an external organisation – either a professional association or a partner to the Trust – so that they can learn from others and widen their opportunities to learn and grow.

We will also secure Apprenticeship levy funding in order to fund apprenticeships in relevant roles in our Trust, reflecting our desire to support our communities and to make the most of all talents.

3c: Professional communities and shared resources

Our Trust is committed to ensuring workload is fair and manageable, drawing on our professional community to share resources and planning wherever possible.

Workload is the most cited reason for teachers leaving the profession; and Ofsted itself has highlighted the issue. At North Star, we are working hard to ensure our teachers work within a supportive and networked environment, whereby teachers can work together to develop resources and materials and to support one another during times of change, not least through high quality professional development. All our teachers have access to a 'Trust-wide' professional network, and we are currently exploring how we can use technology to enable even better sharing of resources and materials across schools.

We are also determined to shape high quality central services that will enable leaders and teachers to focus on teaching and learning and making their schools inspiring places to learn and work. We know there is more to do to provide a responsive and high standard of service across the board, and this will be a priority for the trust in the year ahead.

3d: Promote flexible approaches to working wherever possible

We know how important work-life balance is for everyone who works in our schools. We recognise that our staff are also parents, carers and people with wider interests and responsibilities.

It is important that, if we are to be the best we can be for children and young people, we also have time to manage the demands in our wider lives and find time to relax!

As well as ensuring workload is manageable, we want to create a culture that allows flexibility. Each year we will talk to staff about their timetabling commitments and the demands they may have in their wider lives, helping - wherever possible - to ensure that hours and working patterns suit everyone. We're also committed to providing secondments across schools, and to sharing staff between schools in order to provide cover or support staff during times of need or crisis.

Theme 4: High quality leadership

4a: Recruiting and retaining excellent leaders

The most important influence on the success of a school, after the quality of teaching and learning, is leadership. Yet, securing high-quality teaching and learning depends on excellent leaders. That's why, over the last two years, we have worked relentlessly to attract some of the most accomplished school leaders in our communities to lead our academies.

All of our headteachers have a strong track record and a deep passion for providing all children and young people with an enriching and inspiring education. They also have a deep commitment to our communities here in North London, with many having lived and worked here for many years. Our

headteachers are not only excellent leaders of teaching and learning, they are also leaders of their communities and excellent role models for staff and children and young people alike.

Indeed, this commitment to excellent leadership extends to our senior leadership teams and to all staff across our schools.

4b: Developing our leaders through experience, coaching and mentoring

As a Trust, we are committed to developing the expertise of our leaders and ensuring that their talents and skills benefits not only one school, but all our schools. We are also committed to ensuring all staff understand the part they can play in helping our Trust to thrive.

In the coming years we will ensure that members of our senior school leadership teams (SLT) have more training and 'on the job' opportunities to step up to 'cross-school' improvement leadership as the Trust grows. Each middle and senior leader will be supported to find a mentor. Each senior leader will receive more formal coaching support. Our cross-Academy curriculum initiatives will provide opportunity for middle and senior leaders to take on Trust-wide roles regarding subjects and other aspects of teaching and learning.

4c: Investing in formal CPD and training

In addition to the career pathways set out earlier, we will ensure specific CPD and training is available to those on the journey towards middle and senior leadership. This will be based on discussions with line managers, taking account of individual context and available time and budgets, and will include considerations of:

- Middle school leadership programmes including NPQML
- Senior school leadership programmes including NPQH
- Support for professional and technical qualifications for staff in other leadership roles.

Theme 5: A sustainable Trust

We will ensure we have a sustainable Trust through:

- Committed governance
- Maintaining financial viability
- Efficient and effective central systems and processes
- Estates strategy to ensure appropriate buildings and learning environments.

5a: Committed governance

To be a successful and sustainable Trust, that lives its values, it is essential that we demonstrate the highest standards of governance. This is the foundation of being a successful academy trust.

Trustees

Our Trustees bring a wealth of experience, from those with extensive experience of the world of education and leading successful schools through to those with knowledge and expertise in effective financial management and human resourcing. Our Trustees also bring with them a deep commitment to our values, to serving our North London communities, and to Nolan Principles of standards in public life.

In addition to being the custodians of the North Star Community Trust vision, our Trust board will always be:

- Committed to the Nolan Principles for Standards in Public Life

- Committed to providing the level of support and challenge necessary to ensure the Trust is an inspirational and enriching place to work and learn
- Committed to the success of each and every school across the Trust, in equal measure
- Committed to the financial probity and viability of the Trust
- Committed to ensuring the Trust is at the heart of its communities
- Committed to its own improvement and learning

Our Trust Board is committed to undertaking regular professional development and ensuring that all those taking on the role of trustee receive a full induction to what is such an important role. We are also committed to regular external-review, ensuring we receive high quality challenge and accountability – modelling the importance of learning and a commitment to continuous improvement.

Trustees will support the Trust in focusing on the local community and developing a community offer to help support our children their families and other stakeholders. Our trustees believe in empowering our community to build confidence, belief, with skills and knowledge to access the opportunities that arise. The aim is to help build local sustainability and a better community.

Local governance

In recent years, demands on traditional local governing bodies (LGBs) relating to accountability, school performance, child protection and data have increased. In line with many Trusts, we took the decision to replace LGBs with Academy Advisory Committees. This is intended to streamline the governance model, ensure that school leaders have a single clear line of professional accountability to the Trust Chief Executive, and allow local governors to focus on what really matters in their schools and communities.

Together with trustees, our Academy Advisory Committees play an important part in ensuring our schools are carefully guided. They focus on:

- Strategic governance support to ensure pupils receive the best possible education
- Reviewing outcomes for pupils, their attainment and progress (including pupil premium and sports premium where appropriate)
- Monitoring and challenging implementation of SEND policies / performance of SEND pupils
- Monitoring and challenging implementation of statutory safeguarding obligations and policies
- Monitoring implementation of pupil / student behaviour policies
- Monitoring and reviewing the quality of teaching, leadership and management
- Regularly reviewing / making recommendations with regards to the Accessibility Plan
- Making recommendations / observations to the Trust Board re: staffing and budget
- Providing support and challenge to the headteacher and senior leadership team
- Engaging with the wider community, including support for parent communication, pupil enrichment and taking a role in complaints procedures where necessary.

Each comprises up to 3 education specialists, up to 3 parent governors, 2 community governors and 1 staff governor.

We will continue to liaise with our Trust Board, AACs and school staff to ensure that local governance is working effectively as well as efficiently.

5b: Maintaining financial viability

The Trust has focused strongly on effective management of our finances through stronger financial audit, centralised accounting, and financial compliance. We ensure that we get value for money from our local and central purchases. We have negotiated central procurement contracts for a new MIS system, resources, local authority school improvement support and IT systems. The economies of scale allow the Trust to secure better deals and value for money that individual schools could not achieve on their own. We support each of our Academies in reviewing local staff and non-staff budgets and income so that each Academy has a sustainable budget.

5c: Efficient and effective central systems and processes

A key part of our sustainability as a trust is ensuring that our schools can access high quality central services. It is important that we continue to develop these services, so that leaders and teachers can focus on the core work of teaching and learning, whilst accessing responsive, efficient and affordable support from the central team.

The Trust has already developed a highly regarded safeguarding service for schools, which provides training, co-ordination and expert advice that is valued by our schools.

In the coming years, it is our ambition to realise this value across our other services, including HR, finance, site management, and technological support across the Trust. That means working with our schools to invest in the development of these services, and continuing to recruit expert practitioners who can provide headteachers and others with the advice and support they need. Part of this investment, inevitably, will rely on the future growth of our Trust and taking on more schools. In any case, we want our schools to value every aspect of our central services.

Communication is clearly a priority for our Trust. Whilst we have seen our external partnerships grow and awareness of the Trust's work increase within and beyond our schools, we need to do more to ensure that our central services communicate well with our schools (and vice-versa) and that they are responsive to the needs of leaders and teachers.

To ensure our accountability and responsiveness to our schools, the Trust will survey headteachers and staff each year on the quality and responsiveness of our central services, including identifying what is valued and where further improvements are necessary. This will form part of the executive team's own accountability to trustees.

Each division of our central services will produce a short document outlining the services they provide, and also set out a plan for how those services will be further developed in the coming eighteen months – based on schools' feedback.

5d: Estates strategy to ensure appropriate buildings and learning environments

The Trust estate comprises of many buildings at different stages in their lifespan. It requires careful planning, management and preventive measures to be in place to ensure our schools are in good condition to facilitate learning for all children. We also ensure we address any staff concerns and work closely with all staff to provide a good working environment. External audits help to support the Estates planning process and identify any areas for improvement.

The priority for the Facilities Management team is to always focus on learning environments and meeting statutory health and safety compliance. The Facilities Management team has a central Head of Department who looks at the strategic focus and the bigger projects as well as line managing the

local schools teams. The local facilities management team based in each school will deal with local every day issues.

Working closely with the Headteachers and the CEO the Facilities Management team review any Trust wide initiatives such as learning walls and learning zones in each school to create more spaces for a variety of learning opportunities such as forest trails, and planting areas which feeds in to our broader curriculum. The Trust continues to invest in the latest technology including ICT and large teaching screens to replace projectors.

Sustaining the high standards we aspire to requires careful prioritisation and budget planning. With a clear focus on learning and the impact on children.

Summary of our strategic activities

This strategy document has outlined what matters to our Trust to ensure that everything we do is for the benefit of the children, the areas we are prioritising, and how we are going to build on these in the years ahead. We are committed to completing the following over the next three years:

Theme 1: Preparing students for the future

- Developing and embedding our Trust-wide curriculum principles; ensuring that this provides contributed to high quality outcomes for pupils and underpins a culture of collaboration between teachers across our schools;
- Developing and embedding a high-quality STEM and STEAM curriculum, from ages four to sixteen, that is informed by expert teachers, external organisations (including employers and higher education institutions), and cutting-edge thinking;
- We will continue to ensure students are ready for Ebac;
- Developing and rolling out our Pledges, ensuring all our pupils gain at least ten fundamental and enriching early-life experiences before the age of sixteen.

Theme 2: Schools at the heart of their communities

- Ensuring we engage parents and carers in the lives of our schools by providing multiple opportunities for them to be involved in the school and through communication that meets their needs;
- Further developing our Community Outreach Services, ensuring that this is available in all of our schools and to our different and diverse communities;
- Building a formal and sustainable bank of 'North Star volunteers' who can bring a wide-range of skills, experience and passion to enrich the work of our schools; and
- Enhancing our strategic partnerships, ensuring that our Trust is at the cutting-edge of practice and draws on the social and professional capital within its communities and beyond. Publishing an annual plan.

Theme 3: An employer of choice for our staff

- Developing a recruitment and retention plan through a new People strategy;
- Ensuring all staff have a personalised career development pathway, supported by their line manager;
- Ensuring we build a balanced culture of support and accountability, that workload is manageable, with shared resources and planned opportunities for staff recognition;
- Regular formal 360 feedback and staff surveys to continuously improve how we engage our people;

- Adopting the Early Career Framework (ECF) to ensure all of our new teachers develop the right skills to succeed;
- Using opportunities in the Trust to develop talent and succession planning;
- Communicating the benefits of working for us through having a strong brand, active and attractive website and social media platforms.

Theme 4: High quality leadership

- Putting in place high quality professional development pathways into and through leadership roles with a commitment to invest in our leaders;
- Through the new People strategy ensuring leaders at all levels understand our values and agreed behaviours and have a shared understanding of what good teaching looks like by putting in place Trust wide guidance and systems for continuous improvement;
- Having a commitment to creativity and innovation;
- Setting expectations for cross-school improvement ship roles;
- Review our school improvement strategy to ensure it is robust and sustainable.

Theme 5: A sustainable Trust

- Regular external-review of governance, to ensure governance remains of the highest standard and continues to improve;
- Ensuring new trustees receive a full and high-quality induction; and that all trustees and governors have guaranteed ongoing professional development;
- Developing a suite of central services that are highly valued by our headteachers, staff and pupils, clearly set out in terms of the roles of central and school teams, and continuously improved through collective feedback;
- Continuing to monitor our financial audit, centralised accounting, and financial compliance to ensure financial controls are in place;
- Continue to use our Trust-wide economies of to secure better deals and value for money that individual schools could not achieve on their own;
- Support each of our Academies in reviewing local staff and non-staff budgets and income so that each Academy has a sustainable budget;
- Ensuring our accountability and responsiveness to our schools, the Trust will survey headteachers and staff each year on the quality and responsiveness of our central services, including identifying what is valued and where further improvements are necessary. This will form part of the executive team's own accountability to trustees; - A commitment to environmental sustainability.

Vision, mission and values	<p style="text-align: center;">“Stronger together”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">To provide every child and young person with an enriching and inspiring educational experience, where they can thrive academically and socially, both now and in future</p>				
Trust-wide themes	1. Preparing students for the future	. Schools at the heart of their communities	. An employer of choice for our staff	. High quality leadership	. A sustainable Trust
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) In partnership with parents ensuring students are ready to learn b) Enriching and inspiring teaching, learning and curriculum c) Future-focused learning experiences d) An education in the roundest sense 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) High quality and free support for parents and parenting b) Responding to the needs of our communities, respecting diversity. c) Working with a range of selected local and national partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Providing an environment for meaningful work b) Career pathways and professional development c) Professional communities and shared resources d) Promote flexible approaches to working wherever possible e) Promote strong, clear North Star brand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Recruiting and retaining excellent leaders b) Developing our leaders through experience, coaching and mentoring c) Investing in formal CPD and training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Committed governance b) Maintaining financial viability c) Efficient and effective central systems and processes d) Estates strategy to ensure appropriate buildings and learning environments.
Strategic initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed Trust-wide curriculum principles and collaboration • Develop and embed high quality STEAM curriculum • Develop and role out the North Star promise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further develop Community Outreach Services • Create a bank of ‘North Star volunteers’ • Enhance strategic partnerships at community and system level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all staff have a personalised career development pathway, supported by their line manager • Build a culture of support and collaboration, shared resources, all staff benefit from some form of flexible working if they wish; • Regular formal feedback to continuously improve how we engage our people • Undertake rebrand of the Trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put in place high quality professional development pathways into and through leadership roles • Identifying opportunities for cross-school improvement leadership, with appropriate support for those who take on these roles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External reviews of governance • High quality induction for new trustees, and ongoing development • Further develop central services, including service catalogues • Gather regular feedback on services from school staff to inform ongoing development