



# Trust Improvement Strategy

Approved by: Trust Board

Last reviewed: July 2026

Next review due: July 2027

# TRUST IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY

## Introduction

Accountability is a key component of our trust. We hold our schools, settings and services (hereafter, 'organisations') to account to ensure all pupils receive the education they deserve.

This strategy aligns our approach with Ofsted's renewed Education Inspection Framework, effective from November 2025, and with the Confederation of School Trusts (CST) guidance on Building Strong Trusts. It clarifies how we identify support needs, deploy improvement capacity at scale, and assure governance across the trust.

In a trust where most organisations are performing well, we have a responsibility to ensure that leaders know that they can continue to do the best for their pupils without interference.

In the small number of cases where an organisation is not delivering the high standards we expect, we will utilise resources across the trust to leverage rapid improvement.

## Improving our trust

We use the Confederation of School Trusts (CST) Building Strong Trusts framework as a tool to evaluate the quality of the trust's work. This framework provides seven domains of organisational strength:

- strategic governance
- expert ethical leadership
- high-quality inclusive education
- school improvement at scale
- workforce resilience and wellbeing
- finance and operations
- public benefit and civic duty.

By systematically reviewing our performance at trust level against these domains, we gain a holistic view of trust effectiveness beyond individual school outcomes. This self-review process enables us to identify strengths, address vulnerabilities, and plan sustainable improvement strategies, ensuring that our trust operates as a single, coherent organisation delivering educational excellence and civic impact.

## Ofsted MAT Summary Evaluation (MATSE)

Ofsted's MAT Summary Evaluation (MATSE) provides an overview of how well a multi-academy trust is enabling high-quality education across its schools. It is not a graded inspection, but a narrative evaluation designed to inform parents, stakeholders, and the trust itself.

MATSE draws on evidence from recent inspections of individual schools within the trust, alongside discussions with trust leaders and governance representatives. It focuses on leadership, school improvement capacity, curriculum quality, inclusion, safeguarding, and overall organisational effectiveness.

As part of the preparation for a successful MATSE, we will:

- maintain accurate, up-to-date evidence of school performance and improvement actions
- ensure governance minutes and board reports demonstrate strategic oversight and impact
- review trust-wide curriculum intent and implementation documentation
- prepare case studies showing successful interventions and capacity building
- confirm safeguarding compliance and workforce wellbeing measures

## Improving our schools, settings and organisations

We operate a self-improving system in which local leaders, including local governors, are expected to drive educational improvement, strengthened by trust-wide expertise and collaboration. Ofsted evaluation areas and their five-point grading, provide external assurance and a shared language for quality.

Assurance is triangulated across the following governance areas and tools:

| AREA OF GOVERNANCE                                                     | KEY TOOLS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of trust and school development plans</li> <li>• Review of self-evaluation forms</li> <li>• Review of Parent View and parental complaints</li> <li>• Community engagement intelligence</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                          |
| Educational performance and holding leaders to account                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Termly improvement partner reports</li> <li>• Trust-wide 'peer reviews' of curriculum and teaching</li> <li>• Inspection Data Summary Report (IDSR) and internal dashboards</li> <li>• Review against KPIs</li> <li>• Reports to board on outcomes, including performance management</li> <li>• Ofsted report cards by evaluation area</li> </ul> |
| Leadership and governance                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trust self-review against CST domains</li> <li>• Local governing body self-reviews and skills audits</li> <li>• Workforce wellbeing insights</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Finance and operations                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual financial standards review</li> <li>• Finance &amp; audit committee scrutiny</li> <li>• Internal and external financial audit outcomes</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Statutory duties (including safeguarding, health & safety, compliance) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of websites</li> <li>• Termly safeguarding, health and safety reviews</li> <li>• Single central record (SCR) checks</li> <li>• Compliance audits, e.g. safeguarding; safer recruitment</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                          |

### Temporary changes to delegation

Governance responsibilities ultimately sit with the board of trustees, with defined functions delegated to committees and local governance, as set out in our scheme of delegation and terms of reference.

Where serious concerns are identified within an organisation, the board may temporarily remove delegated responsibility for specific or all functions from the local governance tier.

Key triggers for adjustment or removal of delegated responsibilities include (but are not limited to):

- Ofsted report cards indicating any evaluation area graded 'Urgent improvement' or safeguarding 'Not met'.
- 'Needs attention' grades without assurance of capacity for rapid improvement.
- Significant concerns identified through trust assurance (peer/external reviews of provision, finance, safeguarding, health & safety) requiring immediate intervention.

Where performance falls below the expected standard, organisations should expect additional monitoring to ensure rapid improvement. Trust leaders will align support and resources accordingly and report progress to the board.

Action plans will set measurable success criteria aligned to Ofsted evaluation areas and/or CST domains. They will report directly to the board, outlining progress, risks and impact.

Specific details are set out in Appendix A.

### Review

This strategy will be reviewed annually by the board of trustees, or sooner if significant changes are made to national frameworks or trust context.

## APPENDIX A: Identifying support and adjusting delegated responsibilities

| LOW SUPPORT                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | MEDIUM SUPPORT                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | HIGH SUPPORT                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>The local leaders have ‘earned autonomy’ as detailed in the trust scheme of delegation.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>Action group formed, action plan drawn up and reviewed half termly.</b><br><br><b>Adjustments may be made to relevant delegated responsibilities in line with identified concerns</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <b>Action group formed.</b><br><br><b>Delegated responsibilities are removed from local leaders and assumed by the board</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <p>Safeguarding ‘Met’.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>All Ofsted evaluation areas (where applicable) graded ‘Expected standard’ or above.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Latest termly SIP visit identifies all evaluation areas as ‘Expected standard’ or above; OR where one or more areas are identified as needing attention, local leaders have capacity to improve rapidly.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Assurance reviews (provision, finance, H&amp;S, compliance) identify specific concerns, which local leaders have capacity to address.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Local leaders have the capacity to resolve all complaints.</p> | <p>Safeguarding remains ‘Met’</p> <p>AND</p> <p>One or more Ofsted evaluation areas graded ‘Needs attention’, including (where applicable) inclusion, attendance &amp; behaviour, personal development &amp; well-being, early years or sixth form.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Latest termly SIP visit identifies one or more areas as ‘Needing attention’ and there are concerns about local leaders’ capacity to make necessary improvements.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Assurance reviews (provision, finance, H&amp;S, compliance) identify serious or ongoing concerns, which local leaders require external support to address.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Significant or multiple complaints are raised, which local leaders require external support to resolve.</p> | <p>Safeguarding graded as ‘Not met’.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>The school has been issued with a Warning Notice or Significant Concerns letter</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Any Ofsted evaluation area graded ‘Urgent improvement’</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Latest termly SIP visit identifies a risk of being graded ‘Urgent improvement’ or safeguarding ‘Not met’.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Assurance reviews (provision, finance, H&amp;S, compliance) identify serious or ongoing concerns, which local leaders do not have the capacity to address.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Significant or multiple complaints are raised which local leaders do not have the capacity to resolve.</p> |