

Charter.

**A charter
for
Excellence**

Our Mission

Better futures:

**Our work will improve the
lives of children and young
people now and in the future.**

Charter.

Our Vision for Success

Schools that excel

People who inspire

Partnerships that make a difference

Our Values

We are evidence informed

We achieve together

We act with integrity

We are inclusive

Our approach to building School Improvement Capacity:

To achieve our vision together as a family of schools, we have an agreed set of guiding principles to help us be better together, than we are as individual schools. These shared principles are for all schools at every point of their improvement journey, and are based on our values.

We call these shared principles our CHARTER FOR EXCELLENCE.

The Charter for Excellence outlines our current decisions about what is best provided centrally and standardised across the Trust and what is best personalised by each school. Together, we review these decisions annually and reflect on these choices in the light of common challenges and opportunities faced by our schools.

Once we have decided what is centralised, standardised or aligned, we use a research-based understanding of what works to achieve rapid school improvement

Our Values

We are evidence informed

We are ambitious for all and seek to close attainment gaps through better use of evidence.

What this looks like:

- We set stretching targets for all in the knowledge we can reach them
- We use data to focus on causes not symptoms, so that solutions accurately match challenges
- We critically engage with evidence and apply it to improve outcomes for Children and Young People
- We undertake our own research to drive innovation and improvement, in partnership with our Educational Endowment Foundation Research School and other organisations
- We evaluate rigorously, to be sure that our work is having a positive impact
- We engage widely, sharing best practice and developing relationships which motivate and stimulate discussion and involvement
- We are committed to strong and consistent performance that can be relied on

What this doesn't look like:

- Allowing a fear of failure to prevent a good idea from being explored
- Being dismissive of other approaches and learning
- Not engaging with the evidence of 'best bets' for education as outlined by the EEF
- Having different aspirations for different groups of pupils
- Not pursuing our own professional development
- Believing that we no longer need to improve or develop.

We achieve together

We strive for excellence, working collaboratively to respond to, learn from and embrace change.

What this looks like:

- We are a high performing organisation, and we understand what is expected of us and from those we work with
- We are committed to working across key stages
- We believe in getting things done and helping each other be better
- We actively build strong relationships with those who we work with, rooted in respect
- We offer and ask for help when needed
- We listen to each other and ensure all voices are heard.
- We are outward facing and we are committed to working with our local communities - families, local schools, local organisations.

What this doesn't look like:

Working in silos and keeping information to ourselves.

Assuming we know best and making others work to our preferences

Being overly forceful with our own views.

We act with integrity

We lead by example, approaching our work with care, pride and humility.

What this looks like:

- We look after the wellbeing of all our people and students.
- We make long-term decisions based around achieving our mission and living our values
- We abide by the standards for public life
- We work professionally and fairly
- We do what we say we are going to do, when we say we are going to do it
- We are open about decision making processes.
- We work respectfully with external stakeholders and the wider local community.

What this doesn't look like:

Blaming others or failing to take accountability of our own actions
Lacking openness and honesty where we don't achieve our goals
Being afraid of speaking up and challenging inappropriate behaviours
Disrespecting our Trust values.

We are inclusive

We contribute to building a welcoming and healthy culture.

What this looks like:

- We contribute to building a culture that is true to the Trust values
- We embrace openness and honesty.
- We understand and strive for conscious inclusion.
- We are aspirational for all our staff, the children and young people
- We are kind to ourselves and look after our own wellbeing
- We call out inappropriate behaviour
- We encourage and welcome constructive feedback from others
- We feel safe to challenge and be challenged
- We seek to recognise and overcome our biases in any decision making process
- We actively seek to engage with our local community.

What this doesn't look like:

- Assuming we are getting it right
- Being overly or hastily judgmental
- Deliberately excluding others.
- Ignoring feedback on how to be more inclusive.

Our Charter

Why do we centralise?

If something is centralised, this means it is led and managed by one team in service of all schools. It is usually done with business functions like HR and finance. We do this because central services are more cost effective and efficient, duplication is avoided, and school leaders are released to focus on education. Complicated areas of work such as finance are also supported by a unified central team which allows greater expertise to be shared.

Why do we standardise?

If something is standardised, all schools have the same uniform approach or criteria for a particular process or system. As the schools adopts Trust wide systems, the responsibility for the work and its outcomes remains with the school. It is usually done with systems where data is generated and collected, like assessment, pupil administration and school-wide software systems.

We do this because it gives school leaders equity of access to successful approaches, common language and framework to share and evaluate practice and outcomes. It also supports easier Trust wide evaluation and helps shared resources to be focused where they are needed.

Why do we align?

If something is aligned, there is a common goal. A potential change is discussed to move schools closer to the common goal and the best parts of practice across many different settings are brought together to generate a core ideas and principles. The individual schools make changes in the most appropriate way for them, but the practice loses none of the core principles upon which it was founded. It is usually done with approaches to behaviour, attendance, or professional development.

We do this because some things are better done together, as we can all benefit from our shared experience, resources, and reputation. We align because all pupils and staff should benefit from our best collective practice.

Why do we foster school autonomy?

If something is autonomous, an individual school has decided the best approach, often reflective of its own context underpinned by evidence. Approaches are likely to be innovative and the product of carefully considered practice that has developed over time and has impact. It is usually done with what to teach and how to teach.

We do this because schools are best placed to respond to the complex needs of their community, practitioners can be empowered and motivated to make a difference, be innovative and feel accountable for their work. We recognise these are all important factors in retaining great people.

School Improvement Area

How we align to achieve common goals?

Workload and wellbeing

- **Aligned** reviews of staff workload and wellbeing including using the ImpactEd Teacher Engagement platform
- **Aligned** approach to staff feedback with integrity and inclusivity.

We are **aligned** on the following principles when deciding on policy and practice that impacts on workload and wellbeing:

Workload

- We focus our energy on work that has impact on pupils
- We ensure clarity of role and responsibilities
- We understand that manageable workload is important to maintain an environment of high morale, high motivation, and high retention
- We focus on pupil feedback that improves pupil learning rather than mandating a form of marking
- We eliminate unnecessary data burdens – input, process and output
- We are committed to collaboration and making school curriculum resources available to reduce duplication of effort.

Wellbeing

- Change is managed thoughtfully and sustainably
- We champion and enable flexible working and family friendly policies
- We prioritise staff mental health including personalised support through our employee assistance programme (our provider is CIC Healthcare)
- We proactively teach learning behaviours to foster a positive working environment for teachers.

Curriculum

Our schools' curriculums are broad, ambitious, exciting and engaging including a commitment to arts and music. They reflect the Trust's **aligned** principles.

- **Balanced:** the curriculum promotes intellectual, moral, spiritual, aesthetic, creative, emotional and physical development as equally important
- **Rigorous:** the curriculum develops powerful, subject-specific ways of thinking; the subject matter is taught in a way that is faithful to its discipline
- **Coherent:** the curriculum makes explicit connections and links between the different subjects and experiences encountered
- **Vertical integration:** the curriculum focuses on progression by carefully sequencing knowledge. It provides clarity about what getting better at the subject means
- **Appropriate:** the curriculum looks to avoid making unreasonable demands by matching level of challenge to a pupil's current level of maturity/knowledge
- **Focus:** the curriculum seeks to keep the curriculum manageable by teaching the most important knowledge; it identifies the big ideas or key concepts within a subject
- **Relevance:** the curriculum seeks to connect the valued outcomes of a curriculum to the pupils being taught it; provides opportunities for pupils to make informed choices.

William, D. (2013) Principled Curriculum Design. SSAT (The Schools Network) Ltd

School Improvement Area

How we align to achieve common goals?

Teaching & Professional Development

- Evidence-informed practice is at the heart of our approach
- Teachers are given time to learn and develop professionally and it is an expectation that they do so e.g. Early Career Framework, National Professional Qualifications, Lead Practitioner accreditation, subject networks and access to coaching
- We host and partner with the Education Endowment Foundation and use their guidance reports to inform our thinking.

Assessment & feedback

- We publish **standardised** assessment principles and guidance annually
- Internal reporting, including to parents, is high impact but low input.

PRIMARY/EYFS (standardised)

- Termly summative assessment using National Norm Referenced Tests
- We participate in the No More Marking comparative judgement national trial across all year groups
- Termly pupil progress meetings
- Adoption of Insight data tracking system.

SECONDARY

- Annual **standardised** end of year common assessments for Years 7-9
- Year 11 **aligned** mock exams
- Year 13 **aligned** mock exams.

Behaviour and routines

Our school behaviour policies **align** with Trust Behaviour Principles. These are:

- A focus on proactive teaching of effective learning behaviours with time committed in the curriculum to teach these
- We support learners with additional needs to behave well
- All staff have high expectations of behaviour and communicate those clearly
- Clarity over the consequences of inappropriate behaviour particularly where they may lead to suspensions and exclusions in line with national guidance.

Safeguarding

- **Standardised** safeguarding (including child protection) policies that are compliant with national guidance and reviewed annually
- **Standardised** termly safeguarding audits with leaders – Single Central Record, safeguarding and pupil safety
- **Standardised** statutory annual training provided for all staff members including Designated Safeguarding Leads and Governors
- **Aligned** use of CPOMS software to manage safeguarding record keeping and reporting
- An **aligned** attendance policy with guiding principles to address excessive illness, holidays during term time and lateness
- Access to school safeguarding lead supervision.

Special Educational Needs & Disabilities

- Termly reporting on the quality of education including engagement in termly Keeping in Touch (KIT) meetings using **standardised** agenda
- An annual quality assurance review with Challenge Partners
- **Standardised** Trust pro-forma for School Evaluation Forms and School Development Plans (in preparation for next academic year)
- **Standardised** risk management cycle and pro-formas including annual review of all risks and 'getting to green' plans to assess significant risk
- **Standardised** statutory policies including data protection.

School Improvement Area

How we align to achieve common goals?

HR & People

- **Centralised** recruitment & HR support
- All jobs and opportunities are advertised to ensure fair and transparent selection
- **Standardised** core HR policies and procedures
- Support to complete apprenticeships and other training
- **Standardised** recruitment process
- **Standardised** appraisal process for school staff – based on continual development and end of year review.

Meetings

- Weekly Headteacher group meetings
- Termly Subject Network meetings
- Termly KIT (Keeping in Touch) meetings
- Two aligned inset days (1 x conference / 1 x inset).

Governance

- **Standardised** single scheme of delegation; based on our articles of association
- Annual **Standardised** governance cycle, agendas and papers
- Key performance indicators for governing body reports
- Four LGB meetings (2 Autumn, 1 Spring, 1 Summer) and 1 strategy day (facilitated by Trustee or experience LGB member)
- Link governors for safeguarding, health and safety, pupil premium and SEND
- **Centralised** clerking, internal audit, training, and induction
- **Centralised** legal support.

IT

- Use of Brom-com as Management Information System
- **Centralised** IT support services
- **Aligned** IT strategy.

Estates

- Statutory practice and core policies
- **Centralised** estates strategy and budget
- **Aligned** use of I Am Compliant
- **Aligned** Citation Portal for Health and Safety Compliance and Audit management
- **Standardised** programme of site and department audits.

Digital branding & products

- **Aligned** social and marketing media practices
- All schools keep their own name and brand identity
- Schools reference their membership of the Trust on school websites and signage.

Parental Engagement & Community

- **Aligned** communication and complaints policy.

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