Ethos Academy Trust

Strategic Development Plan

2024-2027

ETHOS
ACADEMY TRUST

Nurturing inclusive learning communities

Foreword

Ethos Academy Trust has a long-standing reputation for achieving outstanding outcomes with vulnerable pupils. Our nurture-based philosophy underpins our practice. Our academies provide caring, stimulating, safe and welcoming environments where learning is enjoyable, and teaching is personalised to the needs, aspirations and interests of individuals. Pupils are supported to fulfil their academic potential alongside making strong social and emotional progress.

We seek to explore and celebrate the qualities that make our pupils unique. We believe passionately that education, at every stage of the pupil journey, is about the development and nurture of the whole child. We aspire for all our pupils to become confident, happy and caring individuals who achieve personal success and develop a love of learning and of life.

Our outstanding staff teams are skilled at working with young people with wide ranging special educational needs. In partnership with parents, carers and other professionals, we take a holistic approach to ensuring a young person's needs are identified and met, preparing them effectively for the next stage of their lives.

Our **vision** at Ethos Academy Trust is to create nurturing inclusive learning communities.

To enable us to achieve this, **our mission is that Ethos Academy Trust will draw upon the expertise of our specialist staff and wider partners to provide timely, personalised support, intervention and provision in order to maximise the life chances of all children and young people, informed by a thorough understanding of their strengths and needs.**

Underpinning our mission and vision are **our core values:**

LEADING
with integrity

- Championing honesty and transparency
- Building trusting relationships

THINKING
innovatively

- Finding creative solutions
- Meeting individual needs

IMPROVING
continuously

- Raising standards
- Developing strong and effective leaders

ENCOURAGING
freedom and responsibility

- Working collaboratively
- Investing in effective partnerships

CELEBRATING
achievement

- Improving academic progress
- Enriching personal development

These core values permeate our ideology, conversations and practice across our teams.

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"The staff care about us and make sure to support us in the best way if we are struggling. We have really good relationships with staff."

"The teaching style and the relaxed environment is just right."

Strategic Objectives

Our Trust Board and Executive Leaders are aspirational and optimistic about the future of Ethos Academy Trust. We are proud of what the Trust has achieved since its formation in 2018 and we are preparing for a new and exciting phase of growth and development, with the opening of two new special free schools over the years ahead.

We believe that our three strategic priorities will support us to continue to effectively strategically lead our continued growth and development.

01

Deliver continuous improvement through aspirational curriculum models and nurturing learning environments.

02

Transform children's lives, preparing them for life-long success in the modern world.

03

Develop operationally and financially strong academies (and sustainable Trust systems and structures) with capacity for future growth.

"We all work towards the same goal - better outcomes for children."

Strategic Priority 1:

Deliver continuous improvement through aspirational curriculum models and nurturing learning environments.

Why is it important?

We believe that inclusive, high-quality education is the vehicle through which outcomes are improved for all. Our pupils deserve to be immersed in aspirational learning environments that enable them to:

- **feel safe and secure;**

- **develop resilience;**

- **communicate effectively;**

- **connect positively with others;**

- **thrive;**

- **flourish academically.**

How will we meet this objective?

No matter what stage of development each of our academies is at, we will always focus on continuous improvement of the curriculum within our nurturing learning environments. Ethos Academy Trust has a wealth of expertise across its staff team that will continue to be developed and utilised to provide school to school support.

The development and implementation of the Trust's curriculum principles, pedagogy framework and nurture audit tool will promote the delivery of a broad, immersive, aspirational curriculum in each of our individual academies. Underpinned by research, we will lead innovative teaching and learning and nurturing practices to transform our pupils' experiences, aspirations and life-long opportunities.

Objective

Year 1 Milestones

1.1 The Trust's curriculum principles and pedagogy framework become integrated into equitable, aspirational curriculum provision in each academy, rooted in our vision and values.

- All academies review and refine their curriculum offer to ensure that it is underpinned by our new curriculum principles.

- A teaching and learning pedagogy framework is created to support consistency and the continual development of aspirational curriculum models.

1.2 The expertise of staff is developed to deliver high quality, relevant, targeted cross-Trust CPD.

- High quality CPD is implemented for all professional networks, enabling our leaders to remain at the forefront of research and practice within their specialist areas.

- A programme to support our expert practitioners to be lead facilitators is developed and implemented.

- Building upon the Festival of Learning, a high-quality programme of CPD relevant to all roles within the Trust is developed.

1.3 Life enhancing 'Trust Promises' for all pupils in every academy are developed.

- Consultation across the year results in readiness for the launch of our 'Trust Promises' in Autumn 2025, with Trust-wide academy level commitment secured (budget, staffing, SDP).

1.4 A Nurture Expectations Audit Tool is developed to ensure that all pupils have equity of access to nurturing environments and teaching and learning experiences.

- Audit tool piloted in every academy.

- Audit tool refined ready for formal implementation in 2025-2026.

Strategic Priority 2:

Transform children's lives, preparing them for life-long success in the modern world.

Why is it important?

We live in a fast-paced and complex world where the priorities, needs and aspirations of our pupils, families and staff are ever changing, within the context of wider society. We therefore have a responsibility to remain agile in continuously responding and adapting to internal and external influences that impact our key stakeholders, ensuring that we provide them with the support they need to thrive.

How will we meet this objective?

We will continue to advocate for inclusion, equity and social justice and remain fully committed to ensuring that our children and their families are at the heart of all our decisions.

We will strive to improve attendance for all pupils by adopting innovative approaches, learning from best practice and daring to do things differently.

We will develop a digital strategy that:

1. uses technology to remove barriers to learning and increase engagement and a love of learning within and beyond the classroom, preparing pupils effectively for adulthood and future career pathways;

2. develops staff digital skills and competencies, resulting in increased efficiencies and reduced workload.

We will lead and learn from research in relation to SEND to remain at the cutting edge of inclusive practices.

We will continue to develop a strong sense of inclusion and belonging within our staff team as part of a refresh of the Trust's People Strategy, further enhancing staff induction in relation to our vision, core values and inclusive SEND policies and practice.

Objective

Year 1 Milestones

2.1 A Trust-wide focus on the improvement of pupil attendance is strategically led by the new Attendance Professional Network, with all academies having this as a strategic development priority, supported by the development and implementation of an internal audit tool.

- The effective analysis of attendance data, stakeholder surveys, audit outcomes and other initiatives informs the targeted implementation of attendance improvement strategies at academy level, with demonstratable improvements in pupil attendance across the Trust.

2.2 Research and develop thinking around digital transformation and Artificial Intelligence (AI), in relation to Trust-wide priorities, with consideration of the capacity and expertise required to lead workstreams within this area.

- A comprehensive Trust Digital Strategy and action plan is developed and costed, supported by input from all professional networks.

- A CPD programme for staff at all stages of digital competence is developed.

2.3 Informed by the review of the Trust's established People Strategy, refine and further standardise the induction process for all staff to include an increased focus on our vision, values and SEND inclusive practices.

- New staff are effectively supported to understand our 'why' in relation to Trust-wide inclusive policies and practices, as evidenced in induction feedback.

- Feedback is used to refine induction systems to meet the needs of all new staff across the full range of roles within the Trust.

2.4 A Research Practitioners Network is developed to lead thinking and developments in relation to inclusive SEND practices.

- The identification of areas of best inclusive international practice (including in relation to attendance) leads to the identification of new inclusive initiatives to pilot in our academies during Year 2.

2.5 A Trust-wide school council is formed to capture pupil voice to inform Trust-developments.

- Agreed format for Trust-council functions (terms of reference and associated processes) is established.

- First annual Trust-council meeting with CEO takes place with clear outcomes and actions.

Strategic Priority 3:

Develop operationally and financially strong academies (and sustainable Trust systems and structures) with capacity for future growth.

Why is it important?

In order to develop a thriving network of schools and continually secure improvement, there needs to be a sustained focus on building capability, resources and systems to ensure efficiency of all aspects of finance and operations across the Trust. This will support academy leaders to focus on continuous improvement and will position the Trust effectively in readiness for further growth.

How will we meet this objective?

Operational processes in all areas (HR, Facilities, Premises, Finance, Risk, H&S, ICT, Compliance, Governance, Procurement and Sustainability) will be externally benchmarked to inform the development of robust KPIs. Onboarding processes will continue to be refined, informed by timely post-acquisition reviews, to ensure that new academies mature at pace to deliver sustained improvement.

The Environment and Sustainability Strategy will bring to the fore our collective responsibility to plan for the long term future of Ethos Academy Trust. The development of a business plan for growth will outline not only our aspirations in terms of future structures but also the processes that will enable us to achieve successful growth. Continuous horizon-scanning activity at a local, regional and national level will empower leaders to maximise opportunities to influence wider agendas and secure additional income in line with the Commercial Strategy.

| Objective	Year 1 Milestones
3.1 The Trust Environment and Sustainability Strategy is launched and implemented.	• The Strategy is communicated with key stakeholders and the importance of the Strategy is understood by staff and pupils, with local champions appointed in each academy. • Progress measures and reporting systems are developed in relation to all areas of the Strategy (including decarbonisation, community involvement, recycling, energy generation).
3.2 The Trust Commercial Strategy is finalised, approved and implemented.	• Progress measures are established for all areas (e.g. grant funding, governance, Commercial Director role, traded offer, annual funding negotiation process).
3.3 The Trust Growth Strategy is finalised and launched.	• The Strategy is communicated with key external and internal stakeholders, with the rationale for growth being understood by staff across the Trust. • Progress measures and reporting systems in relation to all types of growth are developed.
3.4 Operational systems and processes across functional areas are further refined by:	
3.4.1 Establishing clear baseline / benchmark data for all operational areas (Finance, Estates, HR, ICT, Governance, Risk, Sustainability), enabling Trust and academy leaders to set and monitor against SMART improvement targets.	• Benchmark data is used to support the development of academy-level targets.
3,4,2 Fully costing Trust Strategic Objectives to inform future budget plans.	• The costed plan is included in the budget presentation to the board and approved at the relevant Board meeting.
3.4.3 Enhancing Trust-wide quality assurance processes through the development of a suite of assurance metrics (linked to KPIs and Scorecards).	• Assurance metrics and a balanced scorecard are approved by the Board and are part of the regular review cycle and Exec / Board reporting and quality assurance documentation.
3.4.4 Further developing clear, effective mechanisms for due diligence and the onboarding of new schools (in readiness for future growth).	• Onboarding, due diligence and post-completion templates are finalised and approved by Exec / FARC, ready for future implementation when the need arises.

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"The staff communicate well and respect my child. They fully understand his needs and how to respond to them."
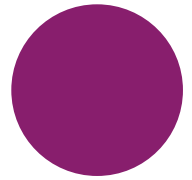
"Ethical leadership is at the heart of this Trust."

Audit, Plan, Do, Review

Our three-year strategic plan will be translated on an annual basis into our annual milestones by the Executive Team, with progress in each area reported formally within Board meetings.

We will ensure that we have a clear understanding of the need we are meeting by continuing to consult regularly with key stakeholders which will inform the development of our annual milestones. We will reach the point of delivery as soon as is reasonably possible, evaluating our progress and impact on an ongoing basis.

Risk Management

We recognise risk as a part of everyday life which cannot be avoided, only mitigated. Where necessary, external expertise is sourced to enhance our capacity to analyse, understand and mitigate risk. Effective governance structures and systems enable us to have a clear understanding of the risks we face and the steps taken to address them. We will ensure that this overview of risk is used to inform our strategic decision making.

We have forward plans which structure the work of our Members, Trustees and Academy Performance Review Committee representatives. Executive and senior leaders model behaviours which create a culture of openness and transparency with all stakeholders.

Our Partnerships

We recognise the key role our external partners play in enabling Ethos Academy Trust to succeed and thrive in order to maximise the life chances of all our children and young people. Our partnerships support and inform our ongoing development. We enter into partnerships with a commitment to having a positive impact on the lives of children and families. Within this spirit, we welcome dialogue with schools, organisations and individuals who would like to work with us in a variety of ways.

ETHOS

ACADEMY TRUST

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Ethos Academy Trust
c/o Reach Academy
Field Hill Centre
Batley Field Hill
Batley
WF17 0BQ

www.eat.uk.com | @EthosAcadTrust