

The Family of Learning

MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

Strategic Plan 2018-21



About Us

The Family of Learning Trust is a newly established and developing MAT serving Calderdale and Bradford.

The Trust is committed to a local approach, unlike some other large academy chains. It believes in “local solutions for local people”, with school improvement work being focused on a true understanding of the community the school serves and the community itself. Therefore, to enable this close working practice, all of the schools in the MAT are within a 30 minute driving distance ensuring that there can be close contact and a personalised approach to leadership and school development.

Beech Hill School (the lead school) has supported a number of schools over recent years benefitting from a number of Specialist Leaders of Education delivering School to School support. Previously the school led on the School Direct Programme, training students to become teachers. Beech Hill School converted to academy status in 2011, and has subsequently developed its central services to ensure it was in strong position to convert into a Multi-academy trust after building partnerships with other schools. We have developed strong networks and partnerships with many other organisations; we have a large and experienced senior team with many areas of expertise including SEND , Teaching and Learning, curriculum, HR, inclusion and finance. We have the capacity and expertise to make a significant impact on improving opportunities for pupils through raising attainment and improving the teaching and learning experiences in other school.

School improvement is a key driver for the Trust and we are committed to working with schools to bring about positive change.

The Family of Learning Trust is a geographically based Multi-Academy Trust (MAT). All academies in a MAT are governed by one trust with a single board of trustees (directors).

The trustees are responsible for decisions relating to how each academy is run, from the curriculum to the staffing. However each academy has a local governing board, to which some of these functions can be delegated to. The MAT remains accountable for these functions. We believe in allowing each academy to retain its own distinct identity, firmly rooted in its local community and supported by efficient and effective central services and expertise. All our academies are focused on school improvement, sharing best practice and developing deep partnerships that will embed consistent levels of student outcomes and ensure positive progress.

Our Vision Statement

At the Family of Learning Trust, we believe that every child matters. There is driving determination to ensure that pupils and adults in the school reach their full potential. Our ethos is a simple one 'Learning without Limits'

Children are given the opportunities to develop as independent, confident, successful learners with high aspirations who know how to make a positive contribution to their community and the wider society. There is a high focus on developing children's moral, spiritual, social and cultural understanding. To ensure effective learning throughout the school, we incorporate core British values into our curriculum. Through the combined use of the 'values approach', our Rights Respecting School status and our creative curriculum, we are able to create children who are effective learners.

This curriculum design ensures that the needs of individuals and small groups of children can be met within the environment of high quality first wave teaching, supported by targeted, proven interventions where appropriate. In this way it can be seen to impact in a positive way on pupil outcomes. Enjoyment of the curriculum promotes achievement, confidence and good behaviour. Children feel safe to try new things. High quality visits and visitors into the school enhance the curriculum and provide opportunities for writing for a purpose. The Arts play a key role in giving every child a vital channel for self-expression, and we provide a wealth of opportunities for children to discover, explore and extend their natural talents. Our forest school provision offers a magical world of discovery. Children learn first-hand about the riches of the natural environment whilst developing important life skills such as team work, problem solving and resilience. To promote physical health and wellbeing, a range of clubs gives learners an opportunity to access a wide variety of sports clubs after school hours and during lunch times.

We believe passionately that education, at every stage of the student journey, is about the development and nurture of the whole person. Our Trust is committed to encouraging creativity, confidence and academic achievement so that our students are ready to for the next stage of their education and able to contribute to wider society. We are a research engaged organisation driving forward the development of innovative education trying to exceed all expectations. When our children leave schools, we strive for them to be well rounded individuals who have the necessary literacy and numeracy skills to succeed in life whilst having experienced an inspiring curriculum which gives them every chance to succeed.

Children have just one childhood; our intention is to provide them with inspirational and unforgettable learning experiences. We place a high value on establishing close links between home and school so that we can work effectively together enabling each child to achieve their full potential.

Our core purpose:

- enable academy leaders and staff to raise standards of achievement and attainment;
- ensure our learners receive a broad, balanced engaging curriculum
- ensure all academies are achieving value for money;
- building capacity across all aspects of education, business and operational activity;
- minimise bureaucracy for leaders so they are able to focus on achieving the best outcomes for learners;
- recruiting and retaining excellent staff within the Trust
- Excellent CPD opportunities
- Ensure staff wellbeing and good work life balance
- Provide HR/Finance and payroll support

We will achieve this by deploying a central team who will work develop value for money central services.

Schools in the Trust

| Name | Address | Headteacher |
|-----------------------------|---|---|
| Beech Hill School | Mount Pleasant Avenue Halifax HX1 5TN | Mrs Shameem Hussain Headteacher and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) |
| Dean Field Community School | Cousin Lane Halifax HX2 0DQ | Mrs Fiona Pether Headteacher |

Beech Hill School

The school is a large multicultural school with 580 pupils on roll. It is situated in central Halifax in an area of high social deprivation. 33% of the school population are eligible for free school meals. The majority of pupils have English as an additional language and mobility for the school is much higher than the national average.

The school was inspected in June 2019 and was judged by Ofsted as 'good' with 'outstanding' for EYFS and Personal development, Welfare and Behaviour.

Leaders are passionately committed to providing an inclusive and nurturing education which raises pupils' aspirations and prepares them for the challenges of life ahead. The school has excellent grounds and facilities with 4G sports pitch funded by the FA, forest school and over the last few years has invested heavily in the school buildings to update and develop areas so they are fit for purpose for the pupils. The school has achieved many awards including the 'Rights Respecting Award' and the Investors in People Gold.

Dean Field Primary School

The school is situated in North Halifax. It is a small school with 209 on roll. 52.4% of the learners are eligible for free schools meals and the vast majority are white British. The school was judged as 'inadequate' in January 2017 and was sponsored by the trust which it joined in January 2018. A new head teacher took up post in April 2018. Since then she and her team have worked hard to bring about rapid improvements in Teaching and Learning; in order to raise attainment across the school.

The school has a strong and developing middle leadership team who are driving standards forwards in both the core and foundation subjects; as well as other aspects of the curriculum. Pastoral provision is a key focus for the school; given their high deprivation factor. The school benefits from a Pastoral Manager who leads on attendance, child protection and safeguarding and a learning mentor who works closely with the most vulnerable pupils.

The Trust's Growth Plan

The trust's ambition is, over time to create a family of local schools working together to meet the needs of the pupils in the area. We therefore have the ambition to increase the number of schools in the Trust, in a timely and considered manner.

Initially we are keen to invite good or outstanding schools to join to strengthen our school improvement model and build additional capacity in school improvement.

In considering any application, the Trust will complete a careful due diligence process.

Central Services

Over the last few years the trust has focused on building capacity in its central services. As school improvement support from local authorities has decreased in recent years it has become increasingly challenging for individual schools to provide the comprehensive range of services that children and staff require. Our trust would provide an effective means to more efficiently source these services, tailoring them to the needs of our schools. Our central services will expand and evolve as our MAT grows and will be tailored to the needs of children and communities. Back-office services include finance including payroll, HR, strategic IT, income

generation and procurement. The centralization of these services releases the leadership teams to focus on school improvement and teaching and learning.

Finance

Our finance team has a wealth of knowledge and experience of managing school budgets and finances in a range of schools across Calderdale and Bradford. They will provide support and guidance to all schools within the MAT on how to manage budgets and make savings. In addition they will oversee procurement for the trust to ensure the MAT is managing finances in the most efficient way.

Trust strategic objectives 2018 – 2021

The Trust Board have agreed four key strategic business objectives which will steer the Trust's growth and development over the next 3 years. These are:

1. **Leadership:** providing outstanding governance and executive leadership with clear succession planning.
2. **Educational standards:** increasing the quality of provision in both schools.
3. **Expansion:** sponsoring and improving schools in need of help and support, developing new partnerships as appropriate.
4. **Efficiency:** ensuring a financially viable and sustainable multi-academy trust.

As a multi-academy trust we have clear strategic aims built on our mission and values. Our three year strategic plan aims to ensure that the public, parents and stakeholders have confidence in our approach.

We aim to deliver the best in:

Leadership (S01)

1. To ensure that the Board of Directors acts in the best interests of the Trust, governing in accordance with its articles of association and having governance arrangements that demonstrate visionary leadership, clarity of relationships, effective oversight and sustainability, whilst achieving the greatest possible economies.

Success criteria: LGBs and school leaders overwhelmingly support board decisions; Board decisions show clear rationale and support the Trust's strategic objectives (evidence: minutes, annual Trust meeting for schools); Board has high profile with schools (evidence: LGB visits; school visits; annual COGs meeting with CEO).

2. To ensure that that executive officers and Trust headteachers provide dynamic leadership that is both rigorous and supportive and delivers an excellent school experience that is sustainable over time.

Success criteria: School leaders overwhelmingly support the work of the executive team

3. To develop future leaders and effective succession planning for all the Trust's schools.

Success criteria: all schools have well supported leaders with no leadership vacuums on a change in headship; NPQH/ NPQSL/NQSML programmes in place and in use

Educational standards (S02)

1. To ensure that our academies provide the very best teaching to promote high-quality learning for our children and young people, and enable teachers to make a real difference for our pupils.
2. To ensure that all schools improve their Ofsted grading if they were requiring improvement or inadequate on joining the Trust; or maintaining their grading if good or outstanding on joining.
3. To ensure that all schools in the Trust are at national average or above in terms of their attainment and progress.
4. To implement a CPD programme to ensure that our staff have the right skills to raise standards further, deliver good teaching and learning, and disseminate best practice to ensure rapid improvement.
5. To ensure that there is a rigorous and robust programme of quality assurance that helps to support staff, build expertise and capacity, and raise standards to deliver positive outcomes for pupils.

Success criteria for points 1-5: All schools graded good by Ofsted within 30 months of joining the Trust; all schools currently graded good or better at least remain good/outstanding after joining the Trust; results at least in line with national averages and between FFT 50 and FFT 20; consistent pattern of academic

performance; accurate predictions of academic outcomes.

Expansion (SO3)

1. To grow the Trust in a measured way to ensure that standards are maintained and improved and that there is sufficient capacity to bring about rapid transformation as required.
2. To grow within a close enough proximity to benefit from the Trust's established infrastructure.

Success criteria for points 1-2: hub growth defined; expansion of Trust does not result in a dip in the performance of any existing Trust schools.

Efficiency (SO4)

1. To ensure that the Trust has business arrangements that are efficient and effective, and enables it to deliver on its commitments to grow and prosper and to deliver value for money across all our operations.
2. To optimise the budget, we will aim to deliver best practice, but at the same time minimise risk and provide value for money.
3. To promote and develop the Trust and the services that we offer to a wider cohort of schools. We will work through a range of partnerships to share good practice and jointly procure services to bring about better value for money and economies of scale.

Success criteria for points 1-3: all schools and Trust comply with statutory guidelines, operate within budget and show annual surpluses; all schools comply with Trust's reserves policy; all schools understand rationale for 'annual contribution' and any changes clearly communicated to school leaders and LGBs (evidence: consolidated accounts; annual audit, annual survey).

Turning strategy into action

It is essential that our strategic planning is realised through effective operational delivery. On the following pages, each strategic objective is supported by an annual improvement plan.

Strategic objective 1: *Leadership: providing outstanding governance and executive leadership with clear succession planning*

Why is it important? The quality of leadership is fundamental to the success of the Trust and creating confidence in it from interested parties (DfE, RSC) and potential joiners and ensuring accurate compliance with academy regulations.

| 2019-20 | What will we do? | Lead | Time scale | Outcome |
|---|---|------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| Enhance the governance of the FOLT Board and LGBs | Board and Trustees carry out self-review | Chair | September 2019 | Trustees govern effectively within a framework which enables the Trust to meet its educational, business and financial objectives. |
| | Skills gap analysed and suitable training organised to fill the gaps/recruitment of further trustees | Trustees | Autumn/Spring 2019 | Trust board has the right skills to drive forward the organisation. |
| | Review the Scheme of delegation to ensure it allows local governors to effectively support and challenge leaders in each academy. | CEO | December 2019 | Each Chair of Governors(COG) understands their responsibility/accountability for the school |
| | Each LGB to complete a skills audit and then training needs identified and a plan of support devised | CEO/CHAIR OF TRUST/COG | September 2019 and ONGOING | LGBs show better understanding of their accountability areas and are able to effectively hold leaders to account |
| | Continue to improve two-way communication between LGB and FOLT Board by Trustees attending LGB meetings. | Trustees | September 2019 and on going | Better understanding of the respective roles of the Trustees and of Local Governors; all working together to achieve common goals; unnecessary duplication avoided; mutual trust embedded. Trustees able to support/challenge LGBs |
| | All new Trust leaders will have leadership support either from within or externally. | CEO | September 2019 | All leaders are confident and able to make decisions in line with the Trust's vision to manage the school effectively and drive standards up. |
| | More Trust Leaders are completing Leadership qualifications. | CEO | July 2020 | Leaders completing NPQSL/Ambition Leadership qualifications |

| Indicators of success: Year 1 | Year 2 | By year 3 |
|--|--|---|
| Trust board members and directors fully comply with statutory guidance. | | |
| All trust schools have fully functioning FGBs. | The minutes support effective challenge and accountability and succession planning. | Policy and practice from LGBs is symbiotic with the trust and each LGB works openly and transparently with the Trust board. |
| All schools have high functioning heads, support is appropriate and effective; early intervention is undertaken where necessary. | <p>Heads are clear about their role and are effectively in driving up standards.</p> <p>Support is given by the central team where required.</p> | The Trust has established and flexible leadership capacity with the experience to support across more than one school. Succession planning is in place and future leaders identified. |

Strategic objective 2: *Educational standards: increasing the quality of provision from all our schools*

Why is it important? Every school in the Trust must be on a journey of continual improvement, aspiring for excellence year-on-year. The wider Trust will do all it can to ensure that it is enabling and investing in rapid, effective and sustainable school improvement in all our schools.

| Indicators of success: Year 1 | Year 2 | By year 3 |
|---|--|--|
| A MAT school improvement strategy is in place. | Strategy connects to all Trust schools' improvement plans | |
| Each Academy within the Trust has accurate self-evaluation. | Leaders across the Trust to provide peer review and challenge of self-evaluation and improvement plans. | A network of external "audit" partners from good and/or outstanding schools established to test our capacity to self-assess and plan stretching improvement targets. |
| Pupil voice informs practice and School Improvement Planning in all schools. | All stakeholders have a strong voice and influence the work of the schools. | |
| Publish data to track progress towards targets (standards, staffing, pupils and finance). Dean Field, to show improvement in phonics. | Culture of high expectations adopted using benchmarking and demanding targets – between FFT 50 and 20. DF -Phonics in line with national average, KS1 and 2 show improvements. | Shared recording systems and information analytically to measure the impact of interventions, approaches and plans based upon outcomes. |
| Introduce consistent standards across the Trust. | Deploy SLEs and lead practitioners in areas of expertise across the Trust. | All SLEs and lead practitioners are leading their areas across the trust. More middle and senior leaders will complete NPQSL. |

| 2019-20 | What will we do? | Lead | Timescale | Outcome |
|----------------------------------|---|---------|-----------------------------|--|
| Standards and school improvement | Set ambitious and aspirational targets overall to raise standards in all schools. | CEO | On going | All targets for all schools, cohorts and sub-groups \geq NA; FFT 20 and upward trend |
| | School improvement Plan is in place | CEO | September 2019 | All academies will be judged as Good or Outstanding within 30 months |
| | Each academy produces a robust self-evaluation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure that judgements of school performance are accurate and highlight strengths and development needs inform School improvement and Development Plan priorities in attainment, progress and achievement | CEO | December 2019 | Our academies will be able to self-evaluate accurately and will have a culture of continued improvement and high aspiration |
| | Establish clear milestones and monitor progress towards targets overall and for sub-groups | CEO | September 2019 and on going | Milestones reviewed termly; provide audit trail for effective interventions |
| | Train and support all leaders with the new 'Ofsted Framework' | CEO/HTs | September 2019 | Ensure all leaders across the Trust (Senior and middle) are able to effectively monitor and drive standards up in their area in line with the new framework |
| | Regular external monitoring/reviews of each academy to show that the school is improving in light of its Ofsted priorities. | CEO | September 2019 | Quality assurance that school is striving to improve and teaching and standards are improving. All academies to achieve 'good' or better in next 'Ofsted' inspection. |

Strategic objective 3: Expansion: *sponsoring and improving schools in need of help and support, developing new partnerships and, where appropriate, creating new school provision to meet emergent need*

Why is it important? Where a school is judged to be inadequate, it will be served with an Academy Order and must be sponsored by another Multi Academy Trust. The Family of Learning Trust has “sponsor” status, and therefore we have a responsibility to bring schools into our Trust which require intervention to enable rapid improvement. As we mature, developing new partnerships is essential if we are to succeed in the delivery of the rest of our strategic objectives. New partnership developments include: more schools joining the Trust (including free schools); developing high-trust relationships with commissioners, strengthening our training provision and establishing formal enterprise links.

| Indicators of success: Year 1 | Year 2 | By year 3 |
|--|--|---|
| Open Dean Field on time and within budget. | Expansion of Trust by 2-3 schools. Good school capacity increased. | Trust stands at 3-4 schools. |
| Successful re-launch of the Dean Field school (fully staffed; financially viable, phonics data shows improvement and KS1 data. | Dean Field meets interim performance and financial targets. | Dean Field achieves 'Good' Ofsted rating. |

| 2019-20 | What will we do? | Lead | Timescale | Outcome |
|--------------------------------|---|-------------|------------------|---|
| Schools at a time of expansion | Ensure new headteacher receive executive support | CEO | September 2019 | Head teacher is confident and able to make decisions in line with the Trust's vision to manage the school effectively and drive standards up. |
| | Update Trust website | HR/FD/ | September 2019 | Website outlines Trust systems, benefits and opportunities |
| | Raise profile of the board | CEO/ICT | July 2019 | Annual Board visits to schools |
| | Continue to work with cluster and Teaching Schools- through SLEs/lead practitioners | CEO | September 2019 | Staff across the Trust are working with partners across Calderdale |
| | Engage with RSC to regarding the expansion of the Trust | CEO | January 2020 | Expansion of the Trust |

Strategic objective 4: Efficiency: ensuring a financially viable and sustainable multi-academy trust

Why is it important? Executive leaders, Directors and Members have a legal duty to manage the Trust's finances responsibly. Beyond this, we have a moral responsibility to ensure that every penny we spend is in the pursuit of better services for the children we work with and the wider public we serve. We will meet all our legal and moral obligations and always be an open and transparent Trust, taking the hard decisions to ensure value for money with regularity and propriety self-evident at all times.

| Indicators of success: Year 1 | Year 2 | By year 3 |
|---|---|--|
| The Trust has a detailed 3-year medium-term financial strategy in place for each school linked to a fully costed school improvement plan. | The Trust aims to keep the top slice as competitive as possible to ensure as much funding as possible is passed on to each school | |
| The Trust has a Reserves Policy in place with sufficient reserves to mitigate areas of high risk across the Trust. | Reserves of 5-10% are secured | Reserves of >5% are secured together with investment strategy outlining priorities |
| Restructuring and consolidating school based hard ware and IT support functions to embrace new technology and drive efficiencies | | |
| To increase efficiencies through better ways of working following a review of systems and processes e.g. reviewing areas of high cost to reduce or rationalise spend. | Restructuring of back office functions across the trust to drive efficiencies, ensure VFM and they are fit for purpose. | Rolling programme of continuous improvement aligned to growth plan to ensure a sustainable model |
| Increase/maintain pupil numbers to maximise funding | Identify additional funding streams where appropriate and bid for additional revenue. | |
| Ensure staffing structures are affordable, sustainable and fit for purpose. Ensure school plans are costed, affordable and sustainable. | Developing our people to ensure they are suitably qualified and skilled throughout the finance and school improvement functions. | Rolling programme of continuous improvement of our people ensuring skills are up to date and using the latest systems and processes. |
| Procured services (HR, Accountancy) have been reviewed with recommissioning undertaken. | Comparable financial data with other schools nationally to allow for accurate benchmarking. | Rolling programme of continuous improvement using benchmarking and self-review for further efficiencies. |

| 2019-20 | What will we do? | Lead | Timescale | Outcome |
|--|---|----------|---------------|---|
| Effective management of Trust resources (current and future) | Maintain the Trust's compliance performance and individual school surpluses in line with reserves policy. | FD | November 2019 | Clean audit management report. No EFA concerns. All schools in surplus with 3-year or agreed viability plans |
| | Improve financial efficiency | FD/IT | July 2020 | Forecasting software in place; investment strategy expanded. Income reviewed for tax exposure. Trust measures effectiveness of individual funds. School |
| | Develop a 3-year Trust IT/Premises strategy | FD | February 2020 | IT/Premises strategy development and presented to heads and board. |
| | Enhance the Trust's human resource management | FD | April 2020 | School Staffing structures benchmarked. Central HR expertise increased. |
| | The Trust is to undertake an audit of all support/ancillary staff to ensure value for money, correct skills, training and to identify areas for development | HR | July 2020 | The Trust is aiming to ensure all staff are fully trained, suitable and engaged in the Trust's ethos. |
| | The trust keeps an updated Risk Register for all schools, that is compliant with current legislations | FD/HR/IT | November 2019 | Trust has a fully up to date risk register of all operational areas and that there are report mechanism and review procedures in place. |

