



Co-op
Academies Trust

Strategic Plan

2022-2025

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Our Intent

Over the last ten years, Co-op Academies Trust has grown from two schools to thirty.

With an original target of 40 schools by 2022, we were unfortunately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Though we weren't able to reach 40 then, we know we can work towards achieving this goal now. Serving schools in the North, North-west and the Midlands, we intend to reach 40 schools in the next 18 months. More importantly, we want every single school to be a strong school - rated either Good or Outstanding by their local community members.

We're proud that our schools are each in a stronger position than when they first joined the Trust, but to really transform our communities, we know there's more to do. This Strategic Plan is ambitious yet realistic, planning to take the organisation to the next level in its development; moving it from an 'evolving' Trust to a 'mature' Trust. The continual improvement of the quality of our schools is at the very forefront of our planning.

We have compelling reasons to believe that we can accomplish this in the next three years. These are just a few of the things on which we base our optimism for the future:

- The capability and depth of quality in our schools in terms of leadership
- The real commitment to develop our dedicated workforce (in line with our People Strategy)
- The excellent support of the Co-op

As we grow, we must proactively develop our infrastructure so that we can continue to deliver high-quality education, a challenge that was particularly emphasised during a very problematic period for education during the pandemic. We must support our communities, staff and pupils to recover educationally so that they can look to the future positively. Many of our communities have been disproportionately affected and so it's more important than ever that our schools can support and help those most vulnerable over the next few years.

With Co-op's support, our schools have truly shown their communities how much they care and the difference they can make. We want to build on this, ensuring stakeholders in our communities recognise the outstanding contribution we make in transforming pupils' lives, as well as the support we provide for the local area.

During a challenging time throughout 2020-21, the benefits of being part of a collective group of schools has never been clearer to colleagues. The benefits of belonging to a Trust speaks for itself, compared to the experiences of stand-alone schools.

Who we are

Throughout this Strategic Plan, you'll understand what it means to belong to Co-op Academies Trust.

We aren't just a Head Office building with a Central Team. We're an entire community of 17,000 pupils, 2,500 staff and 300 Governors and Trustees who all belong to a network with a shared identity, vision and values.

We're working together for a common purpose and, just like the Co-op, we have excellent foundations with a cohesive ethos running through our entire organisation.

We've made a strong start and we're proud of what we do and what we're yet to achieve.

- We have a very strong Trust Board supported by our Academy Governing Councils (AGC)
- Our scheme of delegations provides clarity in terms of roles and responsibilities - still allowing for a significant amount of responsibility handled locally by the Academy Governing Councils
- Our financial systems and structures make us a Trust that is organised, efficient and reliable
- Our strong Governance model means we have the basis to improve and make progress to become an outstanding Trust, in line with all the new national and public definitions

We've made a strong start and want to do more in playing our part in the 'levelling up' agenda. We have a real opportunity to do this, working within some very challenging communities.

We want all of our pupils to achieve their potential, but the real test for our schools is how we help and support the most vulnerable.

Ways of Being

Underpinning every strategy and rationale throughout this Strategic Plan are our four Ways of Being Co-op:

Do what matters most

Be yourself, always

Show you care

Succeed together

Strategic objectives and targets (within 3 years)

Do what matters most

- Ensure our financial systems, operations and processes are consistent, not just meeting compliance standards, but going beyond this in terms of national and local benchmarking analysis
- Audit all areas to ensure there's no critical actions that we aren't aware of and resolve the actions as quickly as possible
- Develop a financial model and policies within the Trust to ensure there is equality of resources and fairness, so not one school is financially constrained and restricted
- Reaching 40 schools in 18 months (with current Hub and Central support model and current Growth Strategy)
- Moving from 3 to 4 Hubs (making the Stoke and Staffordshire Hub and Merseyside Hub stand-alone Hubs in their own right)
- Within our Growth Strategy, increase the number of special schools and colleges so we can build capacity and expertise in this area
- We are a diverse collection of schools spanning each age phase. As well as incorporating special schools and colleges, we look to expand into the same areas we have been successful; primary, secondary, special, and colleges and will not deviate from these key areas
- Develop our Due Diligence model to include a process to assess cultural alignment - helping us provide personalised and bespoke support for schools in unique situations. We'll do this to make the process not only thorough, but also labour and cost efficient
- Ensure across the Trust we offer the best practise in all aspects of GDPR

Our Hubs

Our regional model of three Hubs enables us to provide specialised support, whilst adapting to new communities that join us. We plan to develop a fourth Hub, with a real focus on quality of standards in our schools, not just the number of schools. Our responsibility to our communities is key and we want to be a Trust that is relied upon in every aspect of delivering outstanding support across all areas.

2022-2025

This Strategic Plan outlines a clear intent for the next three years. We believe in co-operation and working with others to benefit our communities. We're proud to be part of the Co-op community, having a unique relationship with our sponsor so that we can be one of the most successful Multi-Academy Trusts in the country, with our values at the heart of everything we do.

We're a diverse Trust in terms of the range and types of schools and it's important that we continue building on that diversity, adding more special schools and developing networks and expertise in this area. The White Paper, published in April 2022, gives us a real opportunity to accomplish this.



Core Values

Everyone in our Trust honours our fundamental commitment to the Ways of Being Co-op.

They are our DNA; they represent our culture and reflect the rationale behind all decision making. During challenging situations, they give direction and logical thinking to help when you need it most.

Our Co-op values are what makes us who we are. As we move forward with intent, they'll continue to provide direction and represent us in how we operate. It is key for us to make sure that all pupils, colleagues and stakeholders know what we stand for:

- Do what matters most
- Be yourself, always
- Show you care
- Succeed together

The four Ways of Being Co-op were developed to create a succinct version of the six co-operative values. These values are the closest match for the seven principles of Public Life (also known as the Nolan principles) and illustrate why, as a Trust, we are proud to be part of the Co-op community:

- **Self-help:** helping ourselves to improve and to make a positive contribution to society
- **Self-responsibility:** taking responsibility for, and answering for our actions
- **Democracy:** all having a say in how we run our Trust and the school
- **Equality:** making sure the voice of each individual can be heard
- **Equity:** striving for a fair and unbiased community
- **Solidarity:** sharing interests and common purposes for the benefits of all

Our entire Trust works towards the co-operative ethical values of:

- **Openness:** we believe in being open, sharing information and ideas to improve the lives of children and young people
- **Honesty:** having a professional and respectful manner with everyone
- **Social responsibility:** we maximise our impact on those in our communities while minimising our footprint on the world
- **Caring for others:** we treat everyone as we wish to be treated ourselves, understanding that children and young people have one childhood



Belonging to Co-op Academies Trust

A Trust has a single legal and moral purpose; to advance education for public benefit.

Our schools, within the North of England and West Midlands, work in collaboration and co-operation as one entity - to improve and maintain educational standards, enabling a broad set of outcomes for our pupils and communities.

We are an education charity that exists to run and improve schools, raising the aspirations of the communities we serve. We're giving children a better future and helping our communities thrive by giving pupils the best educational opportunities and the support they need. We judge ourselves by how well all of our pupils achieve their potential but the real test is how our most vulnerable pupils succeed in primary, secondary, post-16 and special education sectors.

Co-op Academies Trust isn't the building of 1 Angel Square (where our head office is based), but every person within every school and Hub building. It's every pupil, colleague, parent, governor and trustee associated with and belonging to our group of schools. We have 17,000 students, 2,500 staff and 300 governors and trustees across thirty schools, all sharing the same moral purpose - believing in making a difference for our brilliant pupils and their communities.

We're preparing our students for their future and modern day challenges, whilst providing a successful and enjoyable education. We also want to work closely with our communities, supporting and helping them collaborate with each other. We believe our schools are pivotal organisations within their communities and understand their civic role and responsibilities. We are a co-operative Trust, so we want to work in partnership with all external organisations for the benefit of education. We encourage our schools, not just to work within the Trust, but externally with all that play a role in contributing towards pupil and community success.

We work to raise educational standards for all pupils. All sectors of education within our Trust (and we are a diverse organisation in terms of the range of schools) benefit greatly from the collaborative structures in which we operate. We believe that school partnerships, with clear lines of accountability and some element of obligation, are more likely to be successful.



In summary, our collaboration and co-operation (in relation to school improvement) bring the following benefits. These benefits are evident now and we consistently strive to further improve:

- Staff professional development and career opportunities for all categories of staff
- Sharing good practice through our innovation networks across our schools locally and regionally for all staff
- Increased motivation to engage in professional dialogue between colleagues, knowledge mobilisation and a shift towards a more learning-oriented and enquiry-based culture
- Local and regional support and challenge that we provide to our schools in HR, Finance, Governance, IT, Marketing and Communications, Health and Safety, and Safeguarding. All of which ensure our school leaders can focus on teaching and learning within their schools. This model has developed recently in the areas of Safeguarding and Health and Safety



We're developing from an 'evolving' Trust to a 'mature' one.

- All educational areas are developing as we work regionally together in small clusters of schools and across the whole group
- Our network of schools work closely together, enhancing opportunities and educational experiences for pupils and staff
- We've developed a 'high challenge and high support' culture within all areas of the Trust
- Everyone benefits from the diverse nature of our schools e.g. mainstream schools working with our special schools to improve our SEN provision across the whole Trust
- Developing a united culture for students through their entire Co-op Academies Trust Education. From the age of 4-19 they experience seamless transitions when it comes to culture as they move up



Serving our communities

We strongly believe that our schools should engage with their communities in a range of areas - understanding their civic roles and responsibilities to raise educational standards, but also to improve the aspiration of that region.

Some of our communities are more deprived than others, but more than ever, as a group, we can overcome the unique barriers and challenges they face, levelling up the opportunities and possibilities for all pupils in every region that we serve.

Although we're a large Trust, we have a regional Hub model that helps to individualise and regionalise our approach to the needs locally, which compliments our Central support services. We have a local model of Governance to meet the challenges unique to the area, as well as supporting each region to overcome the common barriers we face in our effort to transform communities.

Key Compliance

We offer high challenge, high support in all key compliance areas of education - sharing best practice for the systems in which we operate. We have strong, effective and efficient alignment in all of our operating systems, which are monitored closely with sensible accountability.

Ensuring our schools are safe, secure, well-resourced, well-led and fantastic places for our staff and pupils to be is vital. These are our key priorities. This is a particular strength of the Trust and something that we stand for. We are reliable and dependable, providing our schools with the solid foundations and tools that they need to make progress and improve in all areas.



Scheme of delegation

Our scheme of delegation gives the Headteacher and Governors the authority to develop many areas such as:

- Summative and some Formative Assessments
- Behaviour
- Teaching and Learning
- Staffing Structures
- Recruitment
- Structure of the school day
- Enrichment
- Directed time

These are to name a few. We empower staff with the flexibility to adopt a model that suits the local contexts and challenges. We'll continue to reassess the balance of autonomy within our Hub and Central support models; supporting and challenging schools with the right level of accountability in the areas where they have more flexibility.

As our schools improve towards reaching Outstanding status, the concept of 'earned autonomy' will be adopted to assist the school to achieve world class status. However, even with 'earned autonomy' there are some fixed areas that are non-negotiable. At the same time, if needed, the Trust could step in to run any school in its totality - known as the 'High Priority Programme'.

Working co-operatively

It isn't just about achieving pupil and community success, but it's how we do it. The way we conduct ourselves is just as important as the methodology we adopt.

One example of applying the principles we hold is that we make it compulsory for our schools to adopt the Local Authority Admissions Policies. We believe schools should serve their local communities fairly and we don't believe in any type of admission criteria, such as fair banding or academic selection.

It's key for us to work with all educational partners in a collaborative and co-operative way, and not in a hostile manner, ensuring that we are an outward facing organisation benefiting greatly from positive partnership work.

Strategic objectives and targets (within 3 years)

Be yourself, always

- Using Trust expertise to ensure all SEN students receive the best educational and learning experiences to maximise outcomes for all levels of need. This includes opportunities for careers, employment and post-16 education. We are socially inclusive and adopt the Local Authority Admissions Policy in every school. We celebrate the success of our special schools at every possible opportunity
- Continually working in partnership with Local Authorities when applying for new Free Schools in both communities with a Trust presence and those that are new to us. This includes new Free Special Schools in the communities we serve and those we yet don't

An overwhelmingly positive feature and unique selling point of our Trust is that we're sponsored by the Co-op - with all the business expertise that this brings.

This was especially evident during the pandemic, when Co-op supported our most vulnerable families with approximately £2,500,000 worth of food vouchers and nearly 7000 Chromebooks or IT devices. All helping ensure our children could access learning through the lockdown. Ethically, our shared Co-op values give us the direction and guidance we need, but being part of the Co-op also contributes far more.



Being part of the Co-op Community

The Co-op supports and helps us in many ways. From ensuring strong governance, by recruiting approximately 80 governors from within the Co-op Group, to helping with capacity, resources and leadership. Being a part of the Co-op community means we benefit from the expertise of their suppliers and associates. We benefit from excellent careers events and IT advice/resources. We gain procurement support, for example with Co-op Power and Utilities. Celebrating worldwide causes like Fairtrade Fortnight and developing our young community of leaders, with programmes like the Co-op Young Business Leaders, are just a few of our value-led initiatives supported by the Co-op. This provides strong career progression avenues for our post-16 students, into high level apprenticeships within the Co-op.

Most importantly, the Co-op supports our schools because they understand their commercial community responsibility. In supporting us, they're supporting the communities that we exist in. It's about investing in our communities, by helping the children and people who live there. A main purpose of the Co-op is to address the lack of social mobility within the UK and education is a key place to achieve this. By developing our schools in the 'poverty proofing concept', we can ensure that success in education and careers is not negatively affected by background or circumstance.

Co-operating for a fairer world

The Co-op's vision is 'Co-operating for a fairer world' and Co-op schools play a key role in delivering some of the most vital aspects of this vision.

Co-op financed a MIND mental health Trust-wide programme which resulted in schools having an informed mental health action plan to support students, staff, parents and all stakeholders. We have trained experts in every school's leadership team, as well as mental health first aiders. While we're still building on our expertise in this area, our current mental health and wellbeing provision are a prominent part of our education provision. We're passionate about progressing throughout the next 3 years in this area and will ensure that our policies/infrastructures have mental health and wellbeing of staff and pupils at its core.

Strategic objectives and targets (within 3 years)

Show you care

- We'll develop a culture and sense of belonging in our schools, so that all stakeholders are comfortable to speak up and share their mental health concerns. Our schools will individualise the support and care provided, ensuring a safe school environment

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

We drive inclusivity into the heart of everything we do. Our schools serve very diverse communities and we want our schools to celebrate and represent that diversity proudly within all areas, including governance and leadership. Currently, we're working with Leeds Beckett University to train and support schools to deliver an anti-racist curriculum that'll impact a sustainable change in our learning approaches and culture. We're totally aligned with the Co-op in this area and by 2025 we expect to see a great deal of progress in the inclusivity of our schools. We must continue to develop and be the very best of organisations celebrating diversity.

Strategic objectives and targets (within 3 years)

Be yourself, always

- Our People Strategy ensures our schools are great places to work. With serious focus on wellbeing and workload, reducing bureaucracy and delivering equality in all areas - with CPD at the core of our offer. We nurture successful succession planning to ensure we develop our own quality leaders at every level
- We're a leading Trust in working towards reducing the Gender or Equality Diversity Pay Gap as much as possible. This is across all recruitment at every level, including Governors, making sure we fully represent the communities we serve. We are committed to being an employer who offers a living wage guarantee for all
- All of our schools are delivering or working towards delivering an Anti-Racist Curriculum. We celebrate diversity in our schools and communities. We're not only a great place to work, but a fair place to work and we want our membership of Academy Governing Councils to represent the diversity that exists in our communities by 2025



Co-operating for a fairer world for our communities

The Co-op provides a careers programme full of activities and enrichments. Highlights include:

- Virtual Work Experience
- Physical Work Experience
- Informative Workshops

It's crucial to Co-op that they provide opportunities for young people to be heard, make a difference, and develop essential employment skills. The Co-op Young Business Leaders programme, which offers internships to sixth form students as part of their studies, is a perfect example of this. This part of Co-op's vision is key to the levelling-up agenda across the North of England.

Our careers offer includes the expectation that all secondary schools and colleges, including our special schools, achieve the eight Gatsby standards. Careers is also a crucial part of our school's Primary curriculum, by starting early and educating primary children about careers, we're being proactive in our approach to inspiring positive futures. This includes working towards accreditation, if applicable, but also giving students real support, enjoyment and experiences. With the support of the Co-op Careers programme, we're providing successful careers education which is a Trust priority. The most important aspect of education is the destinations of our brilliant pupils and in doing so, helping our communities thrive.

We work with students so that they have the right attitude, optimism, and ambition to set their sights high and succeed in their chosen career. We also make sure they have the inter and intra-personal skills that they need to thrive in the world of work. This is already an area of high priority and genuine strength. Over the next three years, it will be a key area to continually develop, especially after the pandemic, where youth unemployment has been a challenging area.

Strategic objectives and targets (within 3 years)

Succeed together

- We deliver a Co-op Careers programme for every student, designed to raise their hopes and ambitions as well as the local community's aspirations. In doing so, our destination data is strong, the Trust NEET (young people not in education, employment or training) percentage is always less than 3% at every stage and level
- We develop and build the reputation and number of apprenticeships in the areas we work in

Access to food

We'll work with the Co-op to ensure all of our schools have a breakfast club provision and holiday access to food for those in need. This will include working with the Co-op and its suppliers to ensure we support attendance of our pupils by offering a free breakfast to those who need one. It's essential to start the day with a healthy nutritious meal, so that pupils feel confident and can participate and concentrate in class. We want our schools to offer free access to food services to those members of the community who need it e.g. the Community Fridge Programme.

Uniform

We're committed to making uniforms affordable for parents in line with the Department for Education regulations, as well as offering a type of uniform swap programme. We really want to show we care and put this into practice.

Cost of living crisis

More than ever following Covid-19 and rising household costs (cost of living crisis) we need to support our communities with schools and colleges that are real anchor institutions, offering ongoing considered services and support.



Co-operating for a fairer world for our planet

Climate change is the single biggest issue that society faces and needs to be at the top of all our schools' agendas, aligned with the Co-op's strategy. We must support the Co-op to achieve the ten point Climate Change action plan. The plan sets out targets, endorsed by the science-based target initiatives, to cap global temperature increases and meet the goals of the Paris Agreement with COP26. We need to reduce our carbon footprint and play a key role within our communities, by leading the way and setting examples as an organisation that is doing more. If we educate our pupils to do more, then more will be done in our communities. It is essential.

Every school will have a trained Sustainability Lead within the next academic year (2022-2023) and it will also be a core part of Student Voice. We'll actively encourage as many of our students as possible to complete the Climate Leader Award. We will eradicate single-use plastic and encourage reusable and recyclable materials in all of our schools as soon as possible.

Strategic objectives and targets (within 3 years)

Show you care

- Be a Green organisation working towards a carbon neutral footprint and giving full consideration to being totally environmentally friendly



Co-op and the way forward

Our areas of concentration for the next three years provide insight into the role our schools play in the Co-op Community Strategy. They are crucial elements of modern day education that we must deliver on to help the development of our communities. It's an articulation of the civic role and responsibilities our schools must adopt to ensure the communities we serve become a fairer place to live.

Over the next three years we'll be developing a community engagement programme with a minimum expectation, e.g. food access, that all of our schools offer in their local area. It'll build on what our schools already have, and are delivering, so that we can deduce what works and what has the greatest positive impact. Engaging with our communities will help the schools to meet their civic role and responsibilities. We will invest in staffing to ensure that schools are well supported in this.

These programmes will be non-negotiable for our schools because they underpin what makes a Co-op Academy unique. The schools will have the freedom to design the programmes to develop local solutions for local issues. This will help massively with parental engagement within our local communities, something that all our schools want to improve, measured by surveys and other tools.

Strategic objectives and targets (within 3 years)

Show you care

- All those belonging to our Trust are co-operators. We would like for all staff, pupils and parents to become members of the Co-op, to have that shared belonging and understanding of what being a Co-op means - growing Co-op members exponentially
- All of our schools and college know, understand and deliver on their civic roles and responsibilities within their communities
- Making sure our schools and college are a pivotal part of the region, supporting the community with its challenges and proactively looking for ways to improve the Co-op's Wellbeing Index for its residents. Setting the minimum expectation of a compulsory community programme for each school and college to offer
- To ensure stakeholder voices are heard and taken into consideration in the Trust's decision-making
- To make Co-op Academies the schools and college of choice in the community and ensure our student numbers are at capacity or oversubscribed. There is no reduction of PAN's (published admissions numbers) and PAN's will increase to reflect ambition
- We'll look at further ways for the Trust to benefit from and work with the Co-op to improve and maximise standards in every area. We'll build on our shared values and goals, developing and evolving with a common purpose
- Every school and college will develop a community strategy to improve the issues within their community, making sure we're building on our Co-op reputation



School Improvement

Over the last two years, we've developed and expanded our regional services in key compliance areas of support and challenge.

We've developed our central school improvement offer to accelerate progress for all schools, depending on where they are in their journey to outstanding. As we move forward, this is crucial to becoming a smarter organisation with targeted support and challenge, improving the educational standards in all areas.

When a school joins the Trust we want to offer as much support as possible, ensuring that they benefit from joining us early on, irrespective of where they are on their journey towards good, outstanding or sustaining excellence. This is a key Trust target and a highlighted focus.

At the same time, if a school entered a difficult period with declining standards, we'd not only identify this early through our accountability framework and data analysis, but also have the capacity and resources to step in - covering all areas for rapid transformation. This is defined as our High Priority Schools Programme; designed to help our schools become good or outstanding in the future.

We want our schools to become very good, strong and outstanding with an excellent reputation in their community. We have high ambitions for every student and want each of them to succeed, however a Co-op school will be judged on how they help our most vulnerable students, preparing them to be Co-op global ambassadors for the future representing the communities in which they live.



A summary of our current school improvement offer.

- Regional expertise, challenge and support in the following areas: Governance, IT, HR, Finance, Safeguarding, Health and Safety, Marketing and Communications, Admin
- Trust wide systems, audit and accountability frameworks in the above areas to assist quality assurance and improve provision
- Regional Directors oversee the above and play a major role in ensuring school improvement in all areas, to achieve good and outstanding outcomes, working with our Academy Governing Council's
- Common assessment at key benchmarks, with full data analysis in crucial areas, with serious consideration given to all secondary schools following the same exam boards per subject. As a data rich organisation we will continue to benchmark and develop in this area especially as we grow to 40 strong schools
- Central contracts to promote best practice whilst offering discounts, achieving best financial value in areas that schools would have to purchase anyway
- An excellent CPD programme for all, building on what we already provide to leaders and teachers. We aim to roll out a level of support to all support staff and volunteers. This includes developing our networks so that colleagues can share best practice and discuss how to overcome unique and common barriers to accelerate school improvement
- Supporting individual schools locally with regional improvement budgets

As we develop from an evolving Trust to a more mature one:

- Offering schools key objectives, connecting them to the right colleagues, to help improve their outcomes through sharing and experiencing best practice within the Trust. Supported by a large Director team and expert Curriculum Leaders, this allows staff to lean on expertise. Our Director team, Leaders in Curriculum areas and key themes to improve and work with key school colleagues to ensure best practice and outcomes are achieved
- A large team of Specialist Leaders of Education will be dedicated to develop school-to-school work and partnership to share expertise and best practice across the Trust
- Co-op Community Teams to build community partnerships and ensure our schools play a key role within their local area, helping with parental engagement measured by surveys
- Regional Sports Events and Leaders to help develop activities and enrichment opportunities for pupils within local areas across our schools
- Regional Music and Cultural Leaders to help develop Arts provision across our schools, to build confidence in offering a wider range of opportunities
- School to school work and partnerships; working in local clusters of schools across several regions to develop our Primary/Secondary Liaison expertise and ensure the best pupil transition possible. We want our primaries to feed into our secondary school and onto our post-16 provision
- Building a SEN school improvement team to help support our SEN staff improve SEN provision and expertise in this key area

Strategic objectives and targets (within 3 years)

Succeed together

- 100% of our schools achieve at least 'Good' overall, after joining the Trust. Our existing schools to achieve 'Outstanding' and 'Good' Ofsted outcomes in all areas by 2025. We have 100% 'Good' or 'Outstanding' schools; the message being that a Co-op Academy is a Good school, guaranteed for the community
- All of our schools annually achieve positive progress pupil scores for secondary, primary and post-16, working towards and achieving Trust-set targets in every area. This includes Pupil Premium and SEN students, with the gaps closing year on year. So, within the current framework, we are adding value to all of our pupils within our communities with positive progress
- For new schools joining, we achieve positive progress, accelerated improvement in every area by year two. If, when joining the Trust, they are good or outstanding, they will sustain and improve their progress scores in all areas from year one
- All of our schools, for all pupils, achieve at least national averages for attendance, indicating that the school is a positive place to attend; an exciting, broad and balanced curriculum is in place, in line with our Curriculum Trust statement
- To ensure, as we continue to grow, the best value for money within our central contracts and in doing so making sure we share best practice in all key compliance areas across the Trust
- To ensure our SCA (school condition allocation - capital funding) is concentrated on those schools that really need it, improving the environment for staff and students to work and learn
- To offer every possible service to our schools, without having to outsource any area of operation, becoming totally independent and financially efficient





Leadership, CPD & Succession Planning

Across our Trust we have excellent capacity and ability within our leaders.

We have central leadership, regional leadership (through regional directors and executive headteachers), headteachers, senior staff and middle leaders. We have an active, impactful and thorough CPD programme to support all of our leaders at every stage of development, with induction and coaching programmes to cover all areas. This includes an excellent training programme for governors run by the Academy Governing Council. The CPD is delivered by experts, in-house and externally, covering a range of key relevant areas. This provision will continue to develop and become even better, including more opportunities for support staff and their development within their roles and beyond. Our CPD programme is excellent and in line with the White Paper which states “we need great staff working with our pupils in our schools”. We have great staff and will continue to develop them so our students get the best provision, from our leaders to our support staff.

We talent-spot and build our leaders of the future, making sure we offer every individual equal opportunities. We always look first for internal solutions to recruitment and work hard to continue to develop a programme of colleague benefits, with a proactive wellbeing programme to retain our staff. All staff will continue to be heard through a series of activities, as well as surveys, where an action plan is produced afterwards to address the main issues.

Strategic objectives and targets (within 3 years)

Be yourself, always

- To develop our Risk leadership and practice, maintaining a healthy balanced risk appetite that evolves and changes as we grow

Student Leadership and Voice

As a Trust we want to promote Student Leadership and Student Voice within all schools. The role of students regarding Climate Change has been outlined, but we want to go beyond this by developing Leadership opportunities, so that students acquire the skills necessary through the curriculum and experiences. We have a Trust wide Co-op Young Leaders Programme offering accreditation and a range of leadership experiences for all our students. We also encourage Duke of Edinburgh participation for all of our secondary schools and colleges.

At the same time, we want them to take a key role in promoting, improving and developing their school in the context of their community. Empowering our pupils allows them to develop into outstanding Co-op citizens ready for modern day challenges. Student feedback through focus groups, panels and surveys that are vital in striving for continuous improvement.

Working in Co-op Academies Trust

Over the next three years we'll be developing our new Schools Direct and Early Careers Programme in partnership with Bright Futures Educational Trust. For a Trust of our size, having our own training route into our schools and developing the Co-op teacher is essential. This adds a crucial new dimension to the Trust. It will be exciting to see the development of the Schools Direct Programme enhancing CPD in schools, but also helping to recruit new teachers, as we cover the Early Career Framework, to ensure our students have great staff to work with and that colleagues have a great environment to work in. This will hopefully encourage them to stay with us for several years, and progress within the Trust.

We want to make sure we fully represent the diversity that exists within our communities so that everyone knows what a 'Co-op Teacher' represents and stands for; our next leaders of the future. As a Trust we will continue to maximise the opportunities for staff.

Strategic objectives and targets (within 3 years)

Do what matters most

- We are delivering an outstanding Schools Direct and Early Careers Programme for all of our schools, ensuring we have an equal and diverse world-class workforce ready to be recruited. This programme enriches our CPD offer, developing the notion of what a Co-op teacher represents, stands for, and will deliver
- For new schools joining the Trust, they must develop a staffing framework that is cost effective and fits in well with our Hub and Central Team services. Crucially, we do this as quickly as possible to allow maximum spend for the new school on school improvement

Our Directors, Specialist Leaders of Education and key staff lead our excellent networks which now cover approximately 30 different areas of education. From the Pupil Premium Steering and Network group, to SEN and Primary Maths. The networks are excellent for sharing issues, finding solutions, and sharing good practice in the full spirit of co-operation and collaboration within the Trust. This is essential for school improvement and reflects the real benefit of being part of a strong Trust.

We'll continue to grow our networks, across all staff categories in the Trust, to be more effective and efficient with special emphasis on support staff and being more accommodating for them.

This includes our special schools and post-16 networks, as we increase our number of special schools and post-16 provision in all regions. Our existing special schools will bring a wealth of knowledge and expertise to our new ones.

Curriculum

We view the Curriculum as something that embraces almost everything that a child does in their school on a daily basis.

It is a set of skills, knowledge, understanding and experiences with a thread of co-operative values and principles running through it. It's a mechanism through which children journey towards a better understanding of themselves and the role they play in their community. It encourages children to be ambitious and ambassadors of a co-operative way of life. In line with the Co-op's commitment, we want our schools to develop an anti-racist curriculum over the next three years as we consider ourselves to be a leading Trust for Equality and Diversity.

Our schools develop their own curriculum and this is the responsibility of the Headteachers - supported by the Governors and overseen through the leadership of our Regional Directors. To assist with the progress, and to give clear expectation and direction, the Trust has produced a Curriculum Principles Statement. This is for both mainstream and special schools and written in consultation with all members of the Trust community.



Digital Technology

We'll continue to use digital technology to help us become more effective and efficient.

From the lessons and expertise learnt during the pandemic, we'll continue to use digital technology to enhance the learning experiences of our children who are developing the skills needed for employment.

From the development of our IT Regional and Central model, it will help to build a more effective and efficient system that is more secure and digitally safe for everyone to use. This model will give us the savings financially to reinvest further in this area and will help to establish technology as a major vehicle for school improvement. We will promote online security with all of our schools and users.

Strategic objectives and targets (within 3 years)

Do what matters most

- To deliver an innovative, effective and efficient IT central service, offering good value for money, but also ensuring the provision is of the highest quality within education

We have opportunities (resources permitting) to use IT to enhance the learning experiences of our pupils within the curriculum. To really improve the quality of learning and make experiences more exciting, more relevant and motivational in delivery - making content engaging for all pupils. This would be even more beneficial for our most vulnerable students, especially in supporting the quality of life for some of our pupils within our special schools.

We want to be a leading player in this area over the next three years and have the capability to achieve this.

Educational Recovery

It has been incredibly hard for all of our staff, pupils and communities over the pandemic. It has been the toughest period of education since the 1940's. We understand the context we're all working in and it has strengthened the resilience and co-operative structures of our Trust.

In writing this 3 year Strategic Plan, all consideration has been given to set aspirational but achievable targets, with the aftermath of the pandemic in mind. We want to do our very best to support our pupils, staff and communities through this educational recovery period. We are only as strong as our most vulnerable pupils. This is why it's imperative to ensure they succeed; we know the most vulnerable have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic but it will not stop us trying our best to overcome this. Working co-operatively and collaboratively with the capability and strength within the Trust, this can be achieved.



Growth & Development

5 year targets - 2022-2027

1

To grow in other regions; creating new Hubs in areas that we don't cover at the moment. By developing our regional and central support model, we'll go beyond 40 schools into new regions within England. Moving from a regional MAT to a national one. In doing so, still serving some of the most deprived communities in England.

2

Develop the infrastructure to be able to go beyond 40 schools - moving to a national organisation from a regional one. Ensuring capacity is sufficient to maintain the excellent standards already set and achieved.

3

Developing more possibilities for students to attend Co-op Academies throughout every phase of their education and ensuring the Co-op values are really evident and clear within that community. Developing clusters of schools within regions, and in doing so, supporting transition.

Glossary

AGC	means Academy Governing Councils
Audit	to make an official examination of the accounts of a business and produce a report
Autonomy	the right or condition of self-government
Benchmarking	a standard or point of reference against which things may be compared
Carbon Neutral	making or resulting in no net release of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, especially as a result of carbon offsetting
COP26	COP stands for Conference of the Parties , and the summit was attended by the countries that signed the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
CPD	means Continuing , or Continuous, Professional Development , can be broadly defined as any type of learning you undertake which increases your knowledge, understanding and experiences of a subject area or role
Due Diligence	means reasonable steps taken by a person to avoid committing a tort or offence
HR	Human Resources is the department within a business that is responsible for all things worker-related
Inter and Intra-personal	interpersonal vs intrapersonal communication is that interpersonal is between two or more people, and intrapersonal is between you and yourself

IT	means Information Technology
Governance	the system by which entities are directed and controlled. It is concerned with structure and processes for decision making, accountability, control and behaviour at the top of an entity
Mobilisation	the action of making something movable or capable of movement
Oversubscribed	means that there have been more applications than there are available places
PAN's	means Published Admission Numbers
Post-16	a course that includes a work placement that will get you ready for an apprenticeship or a job
Regional MAT	Regional Multi-Academy Trust
Safeguarding	means Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm
SCA	School Condition Allocation capital funds, with funds paid to eligible bodies responsible for maintaining school buildings
SEN	means Special Educational Needs
Stakeholder	means a person with an interest or concern in something, especially a business
Trust NEET	means young people not in education, employment or training

Consultation: Co-operation and Collaboration

This 3 year Strategic Plan has been produced in consultation with colleagues in the Trust. It started in the summer term of 2021 with a thorough self-evaluation exercise of the Trust. A Town Hall meeting was completed in all 27 schools, attended by support and teaching staff. On production of the first draft, a second set of Town Hall meetings is to be completed.



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