

Our approach to academy improvement

We believe that each academy has something to offer another by way of great ideas, resources and people. We also believe that each academy in Sussex Learning Trust has a responsibility for every child educated within the Trust. Therefore, all academies within the Trust enjoy 'equal footing' irrespective of their OFSTED grading. Our commitment to each child, each community, is that SLT will deploy its methods and resources to enable its academies to find ways in which it can continually improve their standards.

Academy improvement initiatives should be proportionate. Naturally, at times, some of our academies will require more support than others but there is always the standard SLT package of academy Improvement that each and every academy receives on an annual basis. Where there is increased and/or immediate need (see below) then the Trust will allocate more resources accordingly.

"May I take this opportunity to thank you for your significant contribution to the turning round of this school which has been much appreciated by everyone at WSCC." *Nigel Jupp (Cabinet Member for Learning & Skills West Sussex County Council).*

Sussex Learning Trust's Scheme of Delegation makes provision for the Local Governing Body and its Headteacher to have significant levels of delegated autonomy. The Trust's role in academy Improvement is explained below. There are three basic standards that SLT requires its academies to provide and achieve:-

- a safe learning environment for the children,
- at least 'good' outcomes for the children
- to meet the previous standards within its agreed budget allocation.

Self evaluation, Improvement Planning and Annual Reviews

Always the starting point. Drawing on external and internal sources of information, the Headteacher and CEO or DCEO (with the input of the LGB) will agree the current standards of the academy against

- Leadership & Management
- Quality of Education
- Behaviour & attitudes
- Personal Development
- EYFS (where appropriate)
- Safeguarding
- Overall effectiveness

From this, the Academy Development Plan (ADP) is written, outlining the areas that the academy wishes to prioritise.¹ The Trust expects each academy to deliver outstanding standards, outcomes and opportunities for their learners driven by a rich and broad curriculum.

A Senior Executive for each academy

The Senior Executive Team includes the CEO and Deputy CEO (Dir. Primary)². Our Headteachers are Line Managed by a Senior Executive, either the CEO or DCEO who provide immediate and constant access to advice, guidance etc. Where a new joining academy is a Primary school, the Deputy CEO (DCEO) will obviously advise the CEO and bring their expertise to bear in terms of strategy, knowledge etc. of the phase. The DCEO is assisted by an Assistant Dir. of Primary to ensure appropriate capacity.

The Senior Executive for each academy is responsible for ensuring that, through the leadership of the headteacher, aspirations and standards continue to rise over the short, medium and long term. Scales of efficiencies are realised and best practice is shared across all settings. The Senior Executive Line Manages the Headteacher in partnership with the LGB. Amongst other things the Senior Executive will

- Work alongside the Headteacher in respect of the development of the academy's curriculum; contributing to the needs based budget setting for each academy in conjunction with the Finance team;
- Serve the LGB with advice, guidance and challenge, where appropriate
- Ensure that 'standard' and bespoke academy improvement activities meet both national policy and local expectations so that the academy's provision and outcomes meet external requirements/accountability frameworks and ensuring that all learners benefit;
- coordinate and monitor internal and externally led projects.
- support bid writing for that academy
- with the Head, ensure that preparations for Ofsted and other external agency evaluations and inspections of the Trust are thorough and accurate.

Immediate & Strategic Intervention

The Trust understands that some academies are in a position where there is an immediate need for intervention. For example, where standards or informed predictions suggest that the pupils or students in the academy are not meeting (or likely to meet) their potential or national expectations. This will require immediate intervention in that the children cannot be allowed to 'fail'. In such cases the Trust will deploy intensive support by way of physical and human resources. Immediate intervention is a 'short term fix' and not sustainable so, at the same time, strategic intervention will be required to address the issue 'lower down' in the academy's year groups so that the presenting

¹ This in turn informs the Head's, LT's and whole academy Review, Development & Progression objectives (previously Appraisal) and the CPD of each colleague.

² The CEO and DCEO are the educational standards leads - both of whom are experienced Headteachers. Other members are the CFO & Chief People Officer (CPO) & Chief Estates & Development Officer (CEDO)

issue does not reoccur in future years. Naturally, the intention is that as quickly as possible the systemic issue is rectified but the Senior Executive, as a skilled school improvement practitioner, will need to co-plan with the Headteacher a proportionate response which is likely to still require some immediate intervention for the upcoming year groups until the strategic intervention has embedded.

Where immediate intervention is required the Senior Executive may be quite prescriptive in the approaches required for that academy to improve at pace.

A recent case study

On the threshold of joining SLT, the Trust and LA believed this school to be inadequate, even though an historic OFSTED has it judged as 'good'. The support we provided included:-

- Full time Consultant Head for 2 terms
- 3 weeks immersive Behaviour support to address significant dysregulation
- Consultant SENDCo
- The CEO (NLE) was on site adding leadership capacity for two solid weeks.

This intensive support introduced

- a new Teaching and Learning Policy,
- Introduced new expectations of pupil behaviour and redesigned packages of support for the most dysregulated learners leading to a transformation of pupil behaviour
- trained staff to apply it using digital resources provided,
- increased accountability for teachers and leaders,
- introduced a more rigorous Attendance Policy to parents,
- Took the finance and budgeting responsibilities away from the Head to focus on the above

The academy is now a dramatically better place for children and staff to learn and work and it is well on its way to being entirely transformed. The Trust was able to appoint a new Headteacher in a very timely fashion.

Collaboration & peer support

The Education Development Team is made up of colleagues across each of our constituent academies which means that the bulk of academy Improvement work is delivered on a reciprocal model of mutual benefit. For academies that are 'good', the Trust only prescribes that all of our academies are entirely open to peer challenge and support. Some ways we facilitate this include

- All Heads meet bi-weekly and discuss, amongst other things, the issues or challenges that their settings are facing (Executive Team meetings) along with what is going well and initiatives that may be of interest to colleagues academies
- A strategy of peer to peer support, which involves colleague Heads invited in to look at specific aspects of academy
- Each academy has a named Senior Executive responsible for liaising with their counterparts to ensure that learning and CPD opportunities are frequent across settings and phases.

Central Education Services and our commitment to supporting improvements

The Senior Executive Team is responsible for leading the improvement activities across the Trust. The team is expanding to reflect the growth of the Trust and the needs and requirements of our constituent academies. Each academy has a lead Senior Executive (see above) whose responsibility it is to commission and/or carry out 'standard' pieces of work which are funded by the Annual Partnership Contribution that each academy pays into all of which will naturally help inform and shape the academy's self-evaluation.

Education Development Team

(see below)

In recent years, SLT has established a highly successful strategy of talent development and succession planning for leadership. This has meant that we have developed a large team of specialists who are able to help colleague professionals and their academies improve. The Trust leaders recognise that, often, the best support is available from within the Trust. Where it is not, we have a growing number of Approved Consultants who are inducted into the ethos of SLT and commissioned to carry out activities for SLT because they have specific expertise or experience. For example, OFSTED Inspectors, Alternative Provision etc. Our network of expertise that we can call on is vast.

Our experience in providing impactful School Improvement work

SLT is very clear in its mission:-

- To promote and support the best interests of children in the communities we serve
- To advance education for the public benefit
- To exercise civic duties and responsibilities for the wider good of the local community

We draw very strongly from the work of Leora Cruddas, CEO of [CST](#), the sector body for school trusts, in which trusts are encouraged to be organisations for civic benefit. This is how we have approached our outreach work.

Since 2015 we have been widely involved in the school led improvement initiative. Within our Trust, the transformation of the former Heywood Primary school into the great school it is today, proudly serving an area of significant deprivation has been our proudest achievement in this respect. However, we have also been commissioned by:-

- West Sussex LA
- East Sussex LA
- Department for Education
- Multi-academy Trusts
- School Governors

At the last count, we have supported over 25 schools across all phases of education. Projects are naturally bespoke to the needs of the school, but some examples include:-

- Mentoring of new Heads
- Coaching of existing Heads
- Subject leadership
- Phase leadership
- Staff retention initiatives
- Supporting capability procedures
- Improvement planning
- Pupil Premium reviews
- Schools that have received 2 consecutive RI judgements
- Behaviour management


Jonathan Morris
CEO

Experienced Secondary Head, and National Leader of Education. Expertise in all aspects of leadership.

Education Development Team


Steve Davis
Deputy CEO

Experienced Primary Head. Expertise in school transformation. Highly inclusive in approach with exacting standards.


Jenny Howard
Chief Financial Officer

Chartered Accountant, qualified through an important multinational Accountancy firm. Expertise in all aspects of school finance.


Julie Keylock
Chief People Officer

Chartered Fellow CIPD. Expertise in employee relations and HR strategies for organisational development.


Jon Hickey
Chief Estates Development Officer

A highly experienced School Business Operations and Capital Projects leader, with an MBA in Education Management.


Yasmin Maskatiya

Senior Consultant
Yasmin has a wealth of school and educational leadership. From successful Headships she became a Regional Director for a MAT. She has been an HMI and, most recently, a Senior LA Officer.


Louise New
Executive Principal
All Through School Leadership. All Through Curriculum development. Secondary assessment and data. Ofsted Preparation.

Mark Sears
Asst. Dir of Primary
Experienced Primary Head. Expertise in mentoring and coaching Headteachers and enrichment curriculum.

Sarah Neller
Headteacher

Primary Leader & HT. Expertise in primary Maths. Experience in supporting schools in challenging circumstances (inc. small sch).


Liz Brodie
Headteacher
Experienced Primary Head. Expertise in Maths, English and systemic leadership. Previous experience in faith schools.

Maz Ley
Headteacher
Experienced Primary Headteacher of two large primary schools. NPQEL qualified.




Nikki Simmons
Senior School Leader
 Experienced Secondary School Leader. Expertise in Teaching and Learning, oracy, staff CPD and enrichment curriculum.



Kristy Fitzgerald
Senior School Leader
 Expertise in curriculum 3 'I's. 'Day to day' and strategic school leadership are specific strengths.



Mark Sorrell
Senior School Leader
 Expertise in Safeguarding and pastoral leadership. Experienced in change management.



Ben Phillips
Senior School Leader
 Secondary leadership. Timetabling and curriculum planning. Secondary PE specialism.



James Garner
Senior School Leader
 Primary leadership. Primary/Secondary transition.



Neil Matthews
Safeguarding Consultant
 Retired Senior Safeguarding and Child Protection Police Officer.



Wendy Griggs
SEND/Inclusion
 Experienced Secondary SENDCo and Inclusion lead. Expertise in the above and running Specialist Support Centres.



Cathryn Halton
SEND/Inclusion
 Inclusion, SEND and Disadvantaged pupils. Mental Health and Wellbeing. Improving attendance.



Angela Baxter
SEND/Inclusion
 Experienced Primary SENDCo and Inclusion lead. Expertise in Therapeutic behaviour management.



Karen Hornby
EYFS Leadership
 Experienced Primary leader. Expertise in EYFS & Forest School.



Rob Angell
Curriculum Leadership
 All Through PSHE delivery. Futures and careers provision. Personal Development and citizenship curriculum. Trips (EVC), enrichment and co-curricular programme.

