

2023-2024

The Golden Thread Alliance

School Improvement Strategy



As united as we are different.

Our Educational Vision

Our vision is that all students, regardless of background or need, will achieve highly and have high levels of wellbeing. They will be well prepared for their next steps, and go on to lead happy, purposeful, rewarding lives, making a positive contribution to the world as global citizens.

The curriculum is central to this vision, as it ultimately determines what our students will learn and experience during their time with us. While each Golden Thread school has its own curriculum intent statement that reflects its individual context and values, every curriculum aligns with our Trust's key principles.

Curriculum Principles:



School outcomes will meet or exceed the standards of similar schools.



Trust outcomes will be above the national average for each subject at each key stage.



Every child will listen to, share and read the 'Golden 100' – our list of 100 key books.



There will be no gaps in outcomes between different groups of pupils, including pupil premium groups.



Children with SEND will have a comprehensive and robust programme of support. Each individual will achieve the best outcomes possible.



Our highest achieving children will be challenged, stretched and given time to deepen their understanding.



We will provide opportunities for all children to develop wider skills, knowledge and interests outside of the formal curriculum.

Our improvement strategy is based on this vision and on an academy's capacity to improve. As a Trust, children are at the heart of all we do; we aim to support all of our academies to provide the best possible outcomes and the Trust improvement strategy seeks to achieve this.

The Trust recognises that there is much to celebrate in every academy and looks to develop academies that are diverse and that reflect the communities they serve; individuality and creativity are celebrated.

The improvement strategy identifies how we will work with individual academies and the collective group of schools within the Trust. It aims to provide clarity around the expectations, values, roles and responsibilities and ways of working, in the pursuit of enabling all children to achieve their maximum potential.

At the heart of our improvement strategy is a commitment to working in partnership with all our schools, and in supporting all schools in being self-improving, committed to achieving a school-led system in order to promote and secure a great education for all children in our schools.

Our improvement strategy has been shaped by the concept of strong collaboration so that the skills and talents that exist within the Trust, can be of benefit to all. While each one of our academies is unique, we understand that the mutual challenge, support and partnership that we offer each other as a Trust working together, will enable our academies to flourish and continue to develop into centres of excellence.

All schools in the Trust, or joining the Trust, will be annually assessed as to their current performance profile. This assessment will involve the academy's Deputy CEO of School Improvement and their team. We call this the Annual Peer Challenge Review.

During this annual review, a range of information will be considered as part of the decision-making process including outcomes against key performance

indicators, initial analysis of unvalidated data including ASP and IDSR (where available), recent findings from external visits, the School's Development Plan and the school's own self-evaluation. This assessment will be used to agree the school's priorities for the year ahead and will be reviewed across the year and can be updated at any stage should circumstances change.

Each school will receive at least three days from the Trust's School Improvement team, who will work alongside school leaders against a structured plan of support and challenge. School Improvement conferences will then be facilitated by the Deputy CEO of School Improvement, which will involve a group of Headteachers meeting to discuss and share best practice identified as part of recent visits. Headteachers will also be part of each school's annual Peer Challenge Review and in addition, be joined by a consultant or partner.



Where academies are demonstrating a high level of success and strong capacity for further improvement, it is important that they are able to operate in conditions that enable them to continue this journey. There is also a moral imperative for such academies to share their expertise for the good of the Trust and the wider education system as a whole.

Such academies will have much to share for the benefit of others. Strength mapping will be finalised after the initial annual review and schools will be encouraged to support other schools where their strength matches the need of another.

Some academies will be in more challenging positions. Where this is the case, the Trust will maintain a higher degree of involvement and ensure that appropriate steps are being taken to strengthen capacity and effect rapid improvement.

These schools will receive additional support from the Deputy CEO of School Improvement alongside the Trust's Lead Practitioners.

All of our academies will be expected to engage with the Trust's Core Offer and standardised approaches as outlined by the Chief Executive Officer. The Chief Executive Officer will strategically coordinate and shape all educational elements organised centrally by the Trust so that they benefit the individual improvement journeys of each of our academies. These include all of The Trust Quality descriptors as well as the development of consistency, Trust Partnership meetings, joint CPD and the growth of new Trust initiatives.



Strategic School Improvement Priorities 2023–2025 – Taken from Business Plan

All schools in the Golden Thread Alliance are rated “Good” or better by Ofsted

- All schools within the Golden Thread Alliance achieve, or exceed, the national average in Year 1 Phonics Screening Checks.
- All schools within the Golden Thread Alliance achieve, or exceed, the national average % of pupils reaching the expected outcome, in each of Reading, Writing and Maths, at the end of KS2.
- Overall, the Trust achieves or exceeds the national average for combined levels of attainment in Reading, Writing and Maths at the end of KS2.
- The Trust achieves or exceeds expected progress in Reading, Writing and Maths at the end of KS1, Year 4 and Year 6.

Trust Wide Reading Strategy: Reading by 5: Phonics and Early Reading
Trust Wide EYFS Strategy

Trust Wide Writing Strategy: Sentence Structure, SPAG and writing for a purpose

Trust Wide Disadvantaged Strategy for SEND and PPG/FSM

The Golden Training Offer

The Golden Enrichment Offer – GOALS

Trust Wide Safeguarding Strategy

Trust Wide Attendance Strategy

Trust Wide Behaviour Strategy

The Golden Thread Alliance will demonstrate each of its 7 core values, through its work on EQUALITY

- Improvement plans in place at each school demonstrate a commitment to supporting children and families within each identified group (SEND, Pupil Premium, Black and Asian Families, LAC and PLAC children, Different Families).
- Outcomes tracked for each of these vulnerable groups
- All schools have accessibility plans in place with urgent actions to be completed by September 2023 and recommendations to be prioritised for completion during 2023–2024.
- Leaders at all levels are, as a minimum, representative of their school communities.

Curriculum development, Monitoring and CPD focusing on the Quality of Teaching, learning, and assessment and improved outcomes for vulnerable groups

The Trust Pupil Pledges, Specialist Central Expertise development and joint working with the Local Authority

Staff well-being

- Positive staff feedback through surveys and focus groups.
- Lower than national average absence rates for leaders, teachers and support staff.
- A robust system of staff support and benefits.
- A recruitment and retention strategy that demonstrates a trend of less mobility, greater wellbeing, and improved recruitment outcomes.

The Trust Staff Pledges

Individual School Improvement Strategies

CATEGORISATION CRITERIA

Category	Descriptor	Some likely key features	Engagement
<p>SUSTAIN</p> <p>Outstanding with Good Outcomes</p> <p>Good with Good Outcomes</p>	<p>An excellent school with the capacity to further its own improvement and offer significant support in many areas to others in their improvement journey</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shares best practice, committing to developing excellent teachers across the Trust and delivering school-to-school support within the Trust • Continues to develop and grow their own effectiveness • Grows leaders at every level • Attainment and progress measures are likely to be consistently above average or well above average in all phases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Peer Challenge Review visit led by DCEO for School Improvement and the school Improvement Team • 2 further days equivalent core engagement across the year from Deputy CEO for School Improvement • 1 day for Safeguarding review including SCR review led by Trust Safeguarding lead • 1 day Attendance review led by Trust Safeguarding lead • 1 day reading/writing review led by Trust English Lead • Full involvement in ECT strategy led by Trust Deputy • Full involvement in Peer Learning Conversations and fortnightly Strategic Meetings • Full engagement with Lead Practitioner hub meetings. • Termly quality assurance of pupil progress and attainment • Share best practice with other schools with a focus on -curriculum, quality of teaching and learning and leadership • Share excellent expertise across the Trust including engagement at School Improvement conferences and contribution to Best Practice Portfolio.
<p>REFINE</p> <p>Outstanding with Low Outcomes</p> <p>Good with Low Outcomes</p>	<p>A school that has the capacity to support other schools in some key identified areas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the capacity to bring about improvement in their own organisation through a clear focus on what they need to achieve to become excellent • Provides some support to others within the Trust • Accurately self-evaluates and prioritises next steps for improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Peer Challenge Review visit led by DCEO for School Improvement and the school Improvement Team • 5 further days equivalent core engagement across the year from the School Improvement Team • Weekly 1:1s led by SSIL or EH • 1 day for Safeguarding review including SCR review led by Trust Safeguarding lead

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attainment and progress measures are likely to be at least average and improving over time in all key phases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 day Attendance review led by Trust Safeguarding lead • 1 day reading/writing review led by Trust English lead • Full involvement in ECT strategy led by Trust Deputy • Full involvement in Peer Learning Conversations and fortnightly Strategic Meetings • Full engagement with Lead Practitioner network meetings. • Termly quality assurance of pupil progress and attainment – Led by Trust Data Lead • Share best practice with other schools with a focus on –curriculum, quality of teaching and learning and leadership • Share excellent expertise across the Trust including engagement at School Improvement conferences and contribution to Best Practice Portfolio. <p>School to move to ‘sustain’ within 2 years</p>
<p>REINFORCE</p> <p>Requires Improvement</p>	<p>A school that is not yet able to provide support for other schools and would benefit from additional support in their own improvement journey</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates capacity to bring about improvement or sustain improvement in key areas but has some vulnerabilities in key focus areas for example: leadership capacity and stability, attendance, curriculum intent and implementation, provision and outcomes for SEN pupils and/or external attainment/progress outcomes • Attainment and progress measures, are inconsistent and/or below average in a number of phases <p>Where effective provision is not in place within an agreed timescale, there will be a need for direction from the Chief Executive Officer – see Stabilise.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Peer Challenge Review visit led by DCEO for School Improvement and the school Improvement Team • 5 further days equivalent core engagement across the year from the School Improvement Team • Weekly 1:1s led by SSIL or EH • 1 day for Safeguarding review including SCR review led by Trust Safeguarding lead • 1 day Attendance review led by Trust Safeguarding lead • 1 day reading/writing review led by Trust English lead • Full involvement in ECT strategy led by Trust Deputy • Additional support provided as necessary (for example, Central Team DHT/ AHT support, additional support from Teaching & Learning Specialists) • Termly quality assurance of pupil progress and attainment led by Trust Data lead • Full engagement with Lead Practitioner network meetings. • Possibility of Executive/ Consultant Headteacher support in place to secure rapid improvement

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full involvement in Fortnightly Strategic Meetings • External reviews if required including Governance, SEND and Pupil Premium • Support from other schools across the Trust to secure improvement • Possibility of Executive/Consultant Headteacher support in place to secure rapid improvement • School to move to 'refine' within 1 year to 18 months
<p>Stabilise Inadequate</p>	<p>A school with significant shortcomings and without the capacity to secure their own improvement School requires significant improvement, clarify roles and responsibilities, agree priorities, high visibility, insufficient capacity to improve without direct support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attainment and progress measures in a number of phases are below average and showing no signs of sustained improvement • No clear and sustained focus on school improvement • No evidence of sustained improvement or capacity • Morale and perception of school is low –high staff absence, falling pupil numbers • Need to improve rapidly within a given review period • Inaccurate and overly generous self-evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Peer Challenge Review visit led by DCEO for School Improvement and the school Improvement Team • Monthly progress meeting with Chief Executive Officer, senior leaders and Chair of Governors • 12 further days equivalent core engagement across the year from Deputy CEO for School Improvement • Weekly 1:1s led by SSIL or EH • 1 day for Safeguarding review including SCR review led by Trust Safeguarding lead • 1 day Attendance review led by Trust Safeguarding lead • 1 day reading/writing review led by Trust English lead • Full involvement in ECT strategy led by Trust Deputy • Additional support provided as necessary (for example, Central Team DHT/ AHT support, additional support from Teaching & Learning Specialists) • Termly quality assurance of pupil progress and attainment led by Trust Data lead • Full engagement with Lead Practitioner network meetings. • Full involvement in Fortnightly Strategic Meetings • External reviews completed including Governance, SEND and Pupil Premium • Support from other schools across the Trust to secure improvement <p>Direct Intervention by Chief Executive Officer to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure effective senior leadership, including the

			<p>engagement of a Trust Executive Headteacher or Trust Deputy Head and additional governors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a robust and rigorous Academy Improvement Plan and monitoring and evaluation schedule, underpinned by 6 weekly-Rapid Improvement Plans • Ensure that leadership at all levels can bring about sustained improvement • Secure quality first teaching across the school using expertise from across the Trust • Rapidly raise standards of attainment and accelerate progress across the school <p>An expectation to implement all or some of the following where rapid improvement is required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A daily systematic synthetic approach to phonics (RWI, Little Wandle Letters and Sounds. • Maths Mastery approach (for example, Maths No Problem or White Rose, Maths Hub resources) • Talk for Writing and/or Power of Reading • Whole class teaching of reading • Tailored Curriculum model • Non-negotiable expectations with regard to feedback and marking, learning environment, general systems and processes • Behaviour strategy to eradicate low level disruption and reduce exclusions • Attendance strategy to raise levels to at least national average <p>School to move to 'reinforce' within 1 year</p>
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Note:

Additional External Consultant/Deputy CEO of Improvement Support is likely to be brokered for those schools who are due an imminent Ofsted inspection/Monitoring Visit.

Core Engagement

Each school within the Trust will receive an allocation of time from the School Improvement Team. Visits are spread across the academic year at key points to measure progress towards school improvement priorities and may focus on the areas below:

Focus	Suggested Key Activities
Leadership and Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review school context and emerging issues • Review Academy Improvement Plan and priorities • Discuss the school's Pupil Premium Spending Plan • Conduct a joint Learning Walk (including joint lesson visits and work sampling focusing on presentation, teacher expectations and whether pupils know more and can do more, and whether the knowledge and skills they have learned are well sequenced and are developing incrementally) • Complete a Safeguarding Check, including the safeguarding training register • Identify and agree actions to be taken
Quality of Education: Reading, including Phonics and Early Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the school's approaches to the teaching of phonics and reading (this should involve the English Leader) • Discuss the school's phonics tracking/wider reading assessment information • Conduct a joint Learning Walk (as above) • Meet a group of pupils to discuss their experiences of reading and how well the school fosters and promotes a love of reading • Identify and agree subsequent actions to be taken
Quality of Education: Wider Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Academy Improvement Plan and Pupil Premium Plan and progress to date • Discuss the school's approaches to mathematics and the wider curriculum including, SMSC and Cultural Capital (this should involve the school's Curriculum Leader) • Conduct a joint Learning Walk (as above) • Meet with a group of pupils to discuss their experiences of the curriculum and its impact • Identify and agree subsequent actions to be taken
Quality of provision: Early Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the school's approaches to the curriculum, personal development, assessment and tracking in Early Years (including attainment on entry) • Conduct a joint Learning Walk • Meet with the Early Years Leader to discuss their views of the strengths and areas for development • Identify and agree actions to be taken

<p>Behaviour & Attitudes and Personal Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Academy Improvement Plan and Pupil Premium Plan and progress to date • Discuss Academy’s approach to The Golden Enrichment offer • Discuss the school’s approaches promoting the personal development of pupils, and the impact of their work on pupils’ behaviour and attitudes including the Behaviour Hub audit review • Review the school’s current exclusions and attendance data (including comparisons to previous terms/years) and strategy to promote attendance • Review parent/pupil surveys with a focus on behaviour and personal development • Learning Walk with a focus on behaviour and attitudes inside and outside of lessons • Meet with a group of pupils to explore their experiences of behaviour in school, including the prevention of bullying and how the school deals with any form of harassment and violence, discrimination and prejudiced behaviour, if they happen. • Identify and agree actions to be taken
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Core Offer

Each school within the Trust will receive an allocation of time from School Improvement Team. Visits are spread across the academic year at key points to measure progress towards school improvement priorities and may focus on the areas below:

Focus	Suggested Key Activities
<p>Professional Development For All Staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Trust INSET Day (Autumn 1) • External speakers and trainers to deliver CPD • Regular Partnership Meetings focusing on key themes • Bespoke internal training and support for all groups of staff across the Trust, as required through The Golden Training Offer. • A programme of professional development focused on key priorities for our schools, as well as national priorities
<p>Leadership Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fortnightly individual Headteacher meetings with the Chief Executive Officer focusing on a range of aspects of school including the quality of education, staffing, finance, building, financial position • Fortnightly Strategic joint Headteacher Meetings to promote collaborative working, share best practice, develop improvement programmes, discuss standards across the Trust, plan staff training etc. • Involvement in Peer Review processes, working alongside the CEO, Deputy CEO and/or external consultants • Opportunities for strong leaders to support other settings including School Improvement conferences. • Leadership Development programme for leaders at different levels, including NPQs and Leadership Legacy programmes.

<p>Deputy Ceo For School Improvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Deputy CEO for School Improvement is responsible for providing proportionate challenge and support for schools and: • Ensuring and sustaining high-quality curriculum provision, teaching and learning and leadership in all schools • Monitoring the delivery of School Development Plans ensuring that actions are appropriate and leading to strong outcomes for pupils • Delivering universal, bespoke and tailored training to all schools, individual schools, senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers and support staff • Co-ordinating and facilitating Meetings, Peer Learning/Conversations and Peer Challenge Reviews
<p>School To School Support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead Practitioner roles enable excellent teachers to develop teaching and learning in other schools through support, mentoring and coaching • School improvement conferences 3 x a year – bespoke CPD to Heads group followed by strength mapping allowing schools to pair up and plan improvement in designated areas. • Staff may, on agreement, be deployed to other schools across the Trust for specific purposes • Creation of best practice portfolio • Schools categorised as ‘sustain’ and ‘refine’ provide school to school support as required
<p>Network Meetings</p>	<p>Autumn/Spring/Summer Network Meetings for a range of professionals to share and develop best practice for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEND • Safeguarding • EYFS • PE and Sport • STEM • English • History • Maths • Mental Health & Well-being • Music • Online safety



Standardised Approaches

Focus	Suggested Key Activities
Assessment & Target Setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent approach and format for Target Setting process • Pupil progress and attainment tracking systems updated 3 times per year and shared with the Chief Executive Officer and Curriculum & Standards committee. • Standardised assessments for Years 1 –6 to be administered 3 times per year – this is either PIXL or NTS assessments where appropriate • Termly analysis of data completed by Trust Data Lead with Deputy CEO of Improvement and reported to Trust Board
School Development Plan (SDP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed format in place • All SDPs will be quality assured as part of the Deputy CEO of Improvement's work with schools
Self Evaluation Form (SEF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed format in place • All SEF's will be quality assured as part of the Deputy CEO of Improvement's work with schools
Pupil Premium Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed format in place
Sports Premium Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed format in place
Local Governing Board Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed and consistent format in place for Headteacher's Report, SEND & Safeguarding reports to LGB to ensure that the information provided for local governors is similar across the Trust and covers the necessary areas • Consistent agendas and minutes format across the Trust for LGB Meetings • Bespoke support provided by the Trust Governance lead & Deputy CEO for Governance and community



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