

## TiLA School Improvement Model

### Vision

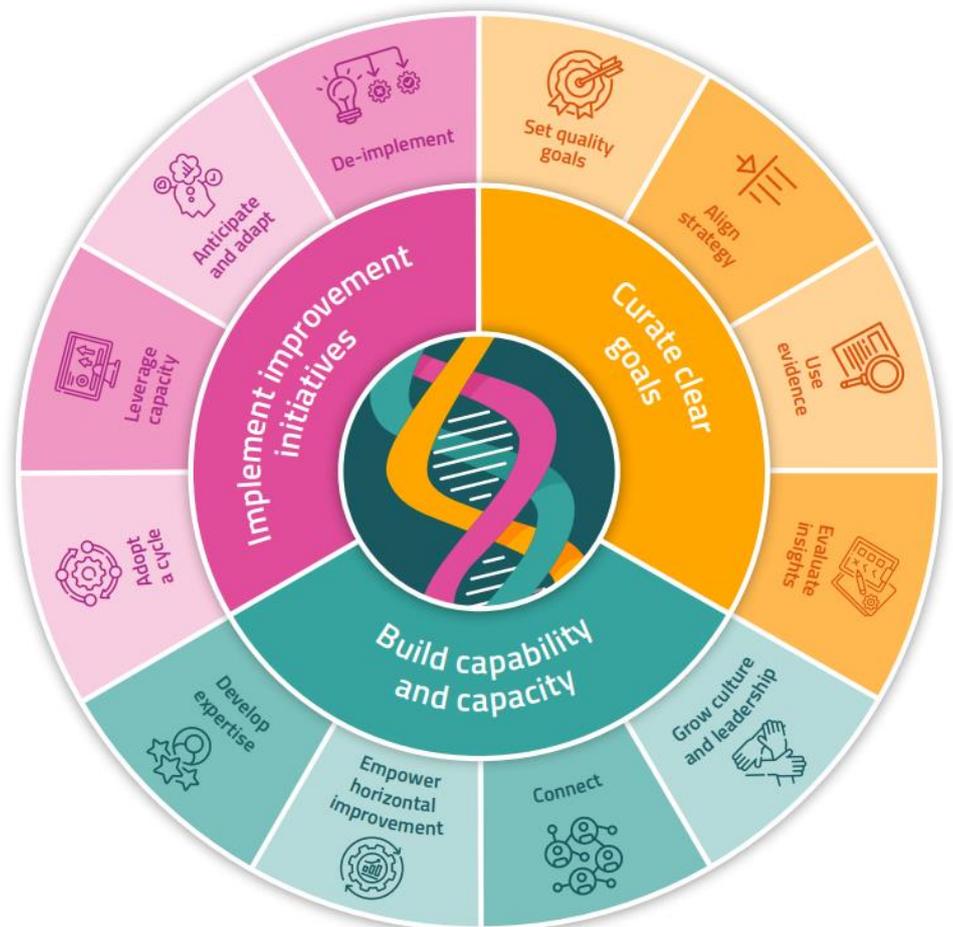
We strive for all pupils across the trust to experience excellent educational provision delivered through the following *strategic goals*:

- an ambitious and inclusive curriculum which benefits from cross-Trust collaboration, is underpinned by TiLA’s curriculum principles, and maximises impact on pupil progress
- high-quality, inspired teaching and learning, based on evidence-informed, inclusive pedagogical principles
- a deliberately designed, effective education system and processes that ensure pupils and schools are equipped for their futures
- a highly skilled workforce that is ambitious, agile, self-sustaining and adds capacity to the education system

We believe that all young people, irrespective of background or ability will be successful in our Trust. We hold the highest expectations of our pupils and our staff. Our *culture* is underpinned by the belief that partnership and collaborative working are the foundation blocks for successful education outcomes, where all schools have individual and collective strength and the opportunity to support and learn from each other. We expect all employees to act with integrity and recognise that we are only as strong as our most challenged school. We embrace the value that “*we are the Trust*”. Our approach is one of sustainability - ‘doing with’ rather than ‘done to’. This allows development of leaders at all levels and ensuring our staff in schools are highly skilled in obtaining the best outcomes for children, thereby *building capacity* and creating *self-improving schools*.

### Evidence-informed

In designing our approach to school improvement, we have utilised the conceptual model of trust-led school improvement (Rollett, 2024) which outlines key considerations based on literature from improvement models across different sectors:



We have also explored the four-stage model of school improvement (Carter, 2021) which we build into our tiered approach:

- Phase one: Stabilise
- Phase two: Repair
- Phase three: Improve
- Phase four: Sustain

## Trust in Learning Model for School Improvement

School improvement is delivered through five themes:



Essentially, the outer 4 of these are enablers, supporting schools through our universal provision – the core trust dividend.

The fifth, central theme evaluates the risk of not providing excellent education, and then identifies a *tiered* need for support. Swift, timely and decisive action may be needed where school performance/provision needs to be improved. We recognise all our schools are individual, at different stages of their improvement journey, and have varied needs and priorities. Therefore, the support provided is not a generic improvement blueprint, but bespoke and *contextualised*.

## School Improvement through:

# Leadership Capability & Capacity

We recognise that headteachers lead their own school improvement, but it is their senior and middle leadership team who hold the capacity to make the greatest sustainable changes. The importance of supporting leaders in understanding and evaluating their school, and in deployment of leaders across the school and Trust, is therefore critical to a self-improving school and Trust system.

Headteachers self-evaluate and produce their School Development Plans, with clear Key Performance Indicators. *Core Visits* three times per year are carried out by the Director of Education alongside the School Development team, to ensure full understanding of context, current performance, needs and challenges, and capacity to improve. The visit involves *senior leader professional conversations* to assess the school's effectiveness to self-evaluate and how this is linked directly to its own action planning and improvement programme. The visit bases its work and its evaluation against the key Ofsted areas: Quality of Education, Behaviour and Attitudes, Personal Development, Leadership and Management, and EYFS/Sixth Form. At the conclusion, the Director of Education summarises *statements of confidence and risk*, according to our agreed descriptors.

Centrally, the School Development Team utilises school and Trust-level data dashboards to *report progress*, *evaluate performance* and *inform priorities*. Common standardised assessments and data drop schedules are calendared. Research insights are synthesised and shared. *Insights* gained through visits and reviews are explored with each school, alongside external data, stakeholder voice and School Improvement Board insights, led by our *Director of School Improvement*. These academy 'health checks' together with supportive and challenging conversations, enable the School Development Team and Headteachers together to identify the *highest leverage* improvement priorities.

Headteachers are part of the *Executive Team*, alongside the CEO, Director of Education, CFOO and School Development Team. Meetings focus on strategic aims and objectives, and include a session on discrete headteacher development which supports understanding of education context, school improvement and shared goals. Headteacher Bulletins enable *regulatory updates* to be shared alongside educational research insights and *think pieces*.

Headteachers commission *reviews* from the School Development Team to support their priorities and understanding of where school improvement is making impact, or where amendments may be needed. Reviews shine a light on excellent practice, highlight what is going well, and identify where practice can be developed further. In addition to representation from the School Development Team, headteachers and senior leaders or subject/phase specialists from other Trust schools are invited to participate in the review. Headteachers commit to supporting other schools within the Trust at a review, and agree to release staff for a few days through the year, to build capacity for school improvement from specialists, and enable learning for senior staff members. Following the Review, the school receives a report from the Director of School Improvement, with findings and recommendations. These work to *reassure, question and provide challenge*. Actions are followed up over the next few months.

Finally, leadership NPQs and leaders' networks are established to develop and share practice, learn from excellent practitioners both within and beyond the trust, and secure *succession* planning.

## School Improvement through:

# Structures & Connections

Structures for school improvement are deliberately designed to enable staff to share and develop approaches that demonstrate impact for learners and build collaborative partnerships across the trust.

### Shared INSET Days

Whole-Trust INSET days are held twice per year to *connect staff* across the Trust in our common goal. We like to meet face to face where possible, to re-connect and enable new staff to build professional relationships. We invite expert speakers to deliver keynotes, and then work in groups to share and *develop our practice*.

### Leadership Networks

Between 3 and 6 times per year networks of leaders (for example SENDCOs, attendance leads, Deputy Headteachers, Designated Safeguarding Leaders, Business Managers, Raising Attainment Leads, and so on) meet to develop knowledge, skills and understanding, share practice, develop strategy and *agree harmonised approaches* across the Trust.

### Professional Learning Communities

Professional Learning Communities bring together subject staff carrying out the same role at primary/secondary five times per year, with the aim of sharing curriculum approaches for *planning and implementation*. In addition to subject specialist teachers, we invite associate staff such as teaching assistants in combined Trust-wide groups, to contribute to specialist SEND groups (e.g. Emotional and Mental Health), or special interest groups, such as global awareness and sustainability.

### Trust Leaders in Education (TLEs)

TLEs are highly experienced and *expert colleagues* who support school improvement in areas identified as strategic priorities for the Trust. Headteachers commission them to evaluate a school's provision within their area. They deliver specific time-bound support to individual schools which includes support with planning and implementation, high-level coaching and mentoring. TLEs identify and *share effective techniques* in their specialist areas based on most recent evidence-informed practice, and develop and publish specialist resources within the Trust. They all lead Hubs in their areas of expertise, co-ordinating a Trust approach to knowledge, curriculum or pedagogy.

### Hubs

Hubs are delegated themed clusters of staff led by a TLE, focusing on an *explicit classroom focus*, for example Phonics or Oracy. Hubs bring colleagues together in a flow of dialogue, discussion and ideas to deliver a specific output which then flows back into school as actions, creating positive change.

### Wider connections

We are positive and proactive members of local and national networks, working to *influence education* and the academy sector landscape. This includes Bristol Association of Secondary Heads and Principals, Primary Heads Association Bristol, and local authority/SEND networks. Orchard School hosts the *Chartered College of Teaching Network Hub* for Bristol – enabling teachers across the country to access talks and ask questions of our carefully-curated educational speakers. We have also engaged in Trust-to-Trust support to enable development through *partnering* for challenge.

## School Improvement through:

### Curriculum

Our school curriculum lies at the heart of education, as it determines what pupils will know and be able to do by the time they have finished that stage in their education. Trust schools have co-curated our *Curriculum Framework*, which sets our curriculum in line with our values, delivers learning experiences that are challenging and ambitious, and establishes inclusivity as a priority.

Trust in Learning's aim is to *inspire* the children in our schools as they experience the best educational provision possible. Our schools are places where every pupil can achieve and make progress in their learning. The curriculum intent is to *empower* pupils, creating broad and enriching experiences which build curiosity and creativity. In our trust, pupils experiencing disadvantage and pupils with additional needs are prioritised; we make every effort to overcome barriers to learning and achievement. The curriculum is therefore the vehicle to *transform* life chances by developing informed, responsible and confident young people, who have the qualifications and personal skills to embrace life opportunities.

Our curriculum seeks to *close the disadvantage gap* through deliberate prioritisation of oracy and literacy by systematic introduction and revisiting of new vocabulary.

### Curriculum Alignment

We fully recognise the value of *aligning curriculum* where it is *evidence-informed* with impact, and where all schools in the Trust can benefit from shared resources, training and expertise. We also know that some schools may choose to *contextualise* elements of the curriculum to be more bespoke for the pupils and communities they serve. Children can benefit from shaping elements of the curriculum themselves (UCL, 2024). By providing some element of meaningful choice, pupils can engage their natural curiosity, enabling greater motivation to discover and learn, building *agency* in learning, particularly for disadvantaged learners. As a Trust we are working towards an 80/20 model with 80% consistency in core areas, and 20% where there may be local variation.

### Assessment and Moderation

Shared assessments and *moderation* activities are calendared for schools across the Trust, and colleagues take part in comparative judgement activities at local and national scale. The central Trust team establishes opportunities to share curriculum expertise, investing in time to observe *curriculum delivery* in other schools, through expert Trust Leaders in Education, and through subject-focused professional learning communities.

### Additional Educational Needs

Importantly, our Trust knows that adaptations for children with SEND are crucial. The Trust's *commitment to inclusion* is unwavering; we expect all schools to know the needs of their children, and to deliver high quality teaching first and foremost. Understanding of "ordinarily available provision" – the support that schools provide for a pupil through their agreed funding and resource arrangements – is essential, as are the adaptations required to enable effective and inclusive delivery of the curriculum. Our *Director of SEND, Safeguarding and Inclusion* supports leaders to effectively deploy teaching assistants in line with best practice (Sharples, 2019).

## School Improvement through:

# Professional Learning & Development

## Culture of Learning

We are fully committed to developing all our staff in order to maximise the opportunities and successes of our pupils. We know that a strong *culture of learning* enables staff to feel energised, able to work more effectively through greater understanding and skill, and experience greater wellbeing at work. This investment recruits and retains *talented and dedicated staff* within all our academies and across the trust.

It is well established that the goal for every teacher in every classroom is to be as good as they can be, and that there is no improvement for pupils without improvement in teaching, and no improvement in teaching without the *best professional development* for teachers (CST, 2021). This is particularly crucial for pupils from *disadvantaged* backgrounds where evidence indicates that the difference between a very effective teacher and a poorly performing teacher is a year's worth of learning (Sutton Trust, 2011).

The six most critical aspects to improve teacher effectiveness (Kraft and Papay, 2014) are prioritised in our Trust-wide approach:

- ✓ Culture of respect, trust and open collegiality
- ✓ Time and resource for high quality professional development
- ✓ Meaningful feedback for teachers to improve their practice
- ✓ Peer collaboration to refine practices
- ✓ Good behaviour for learning
- ✓ Trusted leaders who listen

## Professional Development

All our staff take part in Professional Development Reviews (PDRs) to support and identify their key *priorities* at personal, team and whole-school level. This entitlement to *personalised feedback* and discussion of next steps in colleagues' careers is a vital part of our approach to improving practice.

Opportunities for training to develop skills and knowledge are outlined, with central Trust-led CPD, school-led CPD and external training courses such as *National Professional Qualifications*. We recognise that the facilitation of better professional development, support and challenge ultimately leads to better teaching and sustainable improvement for all pupils. We agree our Trust *approaches to pedagogy* and deliver these through tailored CPLD. Our *Director of Professional Learning and Development* has therefore established a suite of programmes and career development opportunities for staff in different roles across the Trust. We have increased access to specialist consultants in key areas, such as SEND, to support staff in their practice and enhance career pathways. The Trust is fully invested in supporting staff development through the National College online platform.

## Incremental Coaching

All our teaching staff and an increasing number of associate staff take part in incremental coaching. This is our Trust-wide approach to coaching, led by our Coaching Consultant. High levels of professional trust underpin the coaching relationships; *coaching conversations* are safe spaces for colleagues to acknowledge areas for

improvement and explore possibilities together. We use a *shared language of pedagogy*. As a result, coaching presents an opportunity to increase the level of challenge and enable staff to *extend their practice* even further.

Teachers use an agreed scripted framework to support colleagues to improve aspects of their practice two or three times per short term. All Trust schools have access to WalkThru materials and training to support evidence informed teaching strategies through a process of instructional coaching.

## Research

For teaching staff to have the best professional development, it is essentially to make use of the best evidence from research. We have strong relationships with regional Research Schools and with the Chartered College of Teaching. Within our central team we have a *Research Lead*, who works with schools to put research into practice. Our schools engage in research with their staff in different ways, including *Disciplined Inquiry*, *Lesson Study* and through a termly *Research Bulletin* which synthesises research around topics.

Teachers who have a passion for classroom practice and an interest in educational research on a wider scale are entitled to take part in a trust-funded *Developing Pedagogy Project*. This is a funded opportunity to participate in action research in the classroom. Participants work with a University of Bristol education tutor to support them to engage with existing research, plan their activity, carry out the action research over more than one class/setting, and professionally present their findings.

## Chartered College of Teaching Network Hub

Our Research Lead through Orchard School hosts the *Chartered College of Teaching Network Hub* for Bristol, curating an exceptionally popular series of online events delivered by experts with a national profile.

## School Improvement through:

### Risk Evaluation and Tiered Support

Every school in our Trust is entitled to an appropriate level of support to be able to build and sustain capacity to achieve excellent educational provision. The *universal enablers* which all schools access include Trust support in:

- ✓ Leadership capability and capacity – developing leadership skills and experience
- ✓ Trust structures and connections – building collaborative partnerships to share and develop knowledge and understanding
- ✓ Curriculum – enhancing expertise through alignment of curriculum, assessment and moderation activities
- ✓ Professional Learning and Development – growing great teachers and associate staff through CPLD, coaching and research

### Evaluating risk

In order to allocate resources *appropriately and equitably* to our schools to make impact most rapidly on the quality of education for pupils, we define *statements of confidence* and *risk*. These inform the level of support needed in each individual school. The Quality Assurance processes include:

- ✓ 3 Core Visits per year assessing standards
- ✓ SEF and School Development Planning
- ✓ Assessment, moderation, progress and outcomes analysis
- ✓ Annual audits, for example in Pupil Premium, safeguarding and SEND
- ✓ Reviews commissioned and subsequent reports
- ✓ School visits and meetings, including finance, operations and human resources input
- ✓ Governance meetings and community/parent forum
- ✓ External audits, inspections or reports

Descriptors are agreed, which are essentially our statements of confidence, together with the *direction of travel* for a school (improving, static, declining). These generate our *best understanding* of ‘risk’ to high quality educational provision at each school, which is evaluated against the key Ofsted areas: Quality of Education, Behaviour and Attitudes, Personal Development, Leadership and Management, and EYFS/Sixth Form. Statements of confidence and risk are reviewed after each Core Visit.

### Tiered support

We acknowledge that all schools have some strengths to celebrate, and that aspects which are weaker can be limited to one small area or may be more extensive. Our provision is therefore not a ‘blueprint’ for school improvement based on categorisation, but is *bespoke* to meet each school’s unique situation.

The table below shows a summary of the indicators and the potential offer that schools could receive.

Level of risk	Carter's Descriptor	What this might look like
Very low Low	Sustain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school is providing a solidly good or outstanding quality of education, with stable or improving outcomes, and low risk of decline. The school can anticipate and adapt successfully.</li> <li>The school is looking to lead collaboration through spreading their influence more widely through shared leadership. The school supports others, and is growing and offering capacity for school improvement</li> <li>The focus for improvement is on long term planning and longevity, on replication and fine-tuning. School improvement may involve additional support to innovate, challenge and motivate to build on and enhance practice.</li> </ul>
Mid	Improve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school is able to demonstrate a good quality of education overall, but may have declined from outstanding education, be static at good, show inconsistencies, or be evidencing rapid improvements to good.</li> <li>The school may require additional school improvement planning and support, through identifying bespoke leadership needs, a short burst of targeted professional development, or consultancy. The school increasingly benefits from collaboration, providing staff for school reviews and requesting more TLE visits and reviews which they have the capacity to implement.</li> <li>The focus for improvement is on medium- and longer-term planning, particularly on reducing in-school variation. This may be supported through deeper insights, monitoring and tracking of performance data, adaptation to ensure all pupils' needs are met, and growing leaders to develop consistent, high-quality teaching across the school.</li> </ul>
High	Repair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school is declining from good provision, static in improving on weaknesses, have serious inconsistencies and/or unstable staffing, or may be still demonstrating rapid improvements from considerable weakness.</li> <li>The school is in need of regular support to ensure no further decline/rapid improvements are enabled. Exposure to strong practice is essential, particularly gained through school-to-school support. There is a higher level of central team visibility and support to build capacity, particularly leadership.</li> <li>The focus for improvement is on medium-term planning, designing for good or better, with an immediate short-term injection of support to ensure high quality implementation planning. Leaders further promote the culture of expectations and aspirations. Frequent data monitoring and more frequent quality assurance procedures are established, to build consistency, harness good practice and celebrate improving practice.</li> </ul>
Very high	Stabilise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school is seriously underperforming, and actions to tackle weaknesses and concerns have not seen a positive impact. There may be little to no capacity to improve.</li> <li>There is a rapid need to arrest decline. The school requires intense interventions through a bespoke programme of support. There is a high level of central team visibility with calm and reassuring leadership. Capacity may need to be brought in from experienced Headteachers, senior leaders or external consultants, alongside additional resource prioritised by the central team. There is clear modelling of expectations of leaders, high quality pedagogy and further CPLD opportunities to re-build a 'can-do' school culture, raising expectations and aspirations.</li> <li>The focus for improvement is initially on the most urgent priority. The school receives a highly tailored Rapid Improvement Plan to tackle this priority, developed by the Director of Education in liaison with the headteacher, with reported actions. Medium term planning ensures an injection of systems where required, harnessing and celebrating early improvements. Alongside this there is a review of capacity and ensuring team members have the right roles.</li> </ul>

Julia Hinchliffe, Director of Education

## References

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