

CASCADE MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY 2025



VISION

Cascade Academy Trust has a core purpose and vision to deliver outstanding educational outcomes and **transform life chances** for our pupils. We aim to allow our school leaders and staff to develop the individual character of our schools so they can best serve their local communities.

Our improvement strategy is based on this vision and on a school's capacity to improve. As a Trust, children are at the heart of all we do and every decision we make. We aim to support all of our schools to provide the best possible outcomes. The Trust's improvement strategy seeks to achieve this. The Trust recognises that there is much to celebrate in every school and looks to develop schools that are diverse and reflect the communities they serve. We celebrate individuality and creativity.

The improvement strategy identifies how we will work with individual schools 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 and our staff to achieve their maximum potential.

Our commitment to ensuring our teachers teach great lessons offers a package of support through our Teaching and Learning Toolkit and our Instructional Coaching training programme.



Our unwavering commitment is to foster environments where every child thrives, every educator is empowered, and every community connection strengthens, ensuring a future of endless possibilities for all.

Our Core Commitment

At the heart of our improvement strategy is a commitment to working in partnership to ensure all of our schools become self-improving and committed to achieving a school-led system in order to promote and ensure:

- Outstanding levels of achievement for all children and groups of children.
- High quality teaching and learning.
- Effective leadership and governance in all schools.
- Safe schools with fair access.
- Affordability and value for money.
- Access to high quality professional development for staff enabling sustained and continual improvement
- A developing workforce in line with future succession planning needs.
- Opportunities for the identification and dissemination of effective practice. Engagement in research and development opportunities including instructional coaching.

Our improvement strategy has been shaped by the concept of strong collaboration. The skills and talents that exist within the Trust can be of benefit to all. Each one of our schools is unique, however, we face mutual challenges. Our support and partnership offer is based on us working together as a Trust. Through true collaboration our schools will be enabled to flourish and continue to develop into centres of excellence.

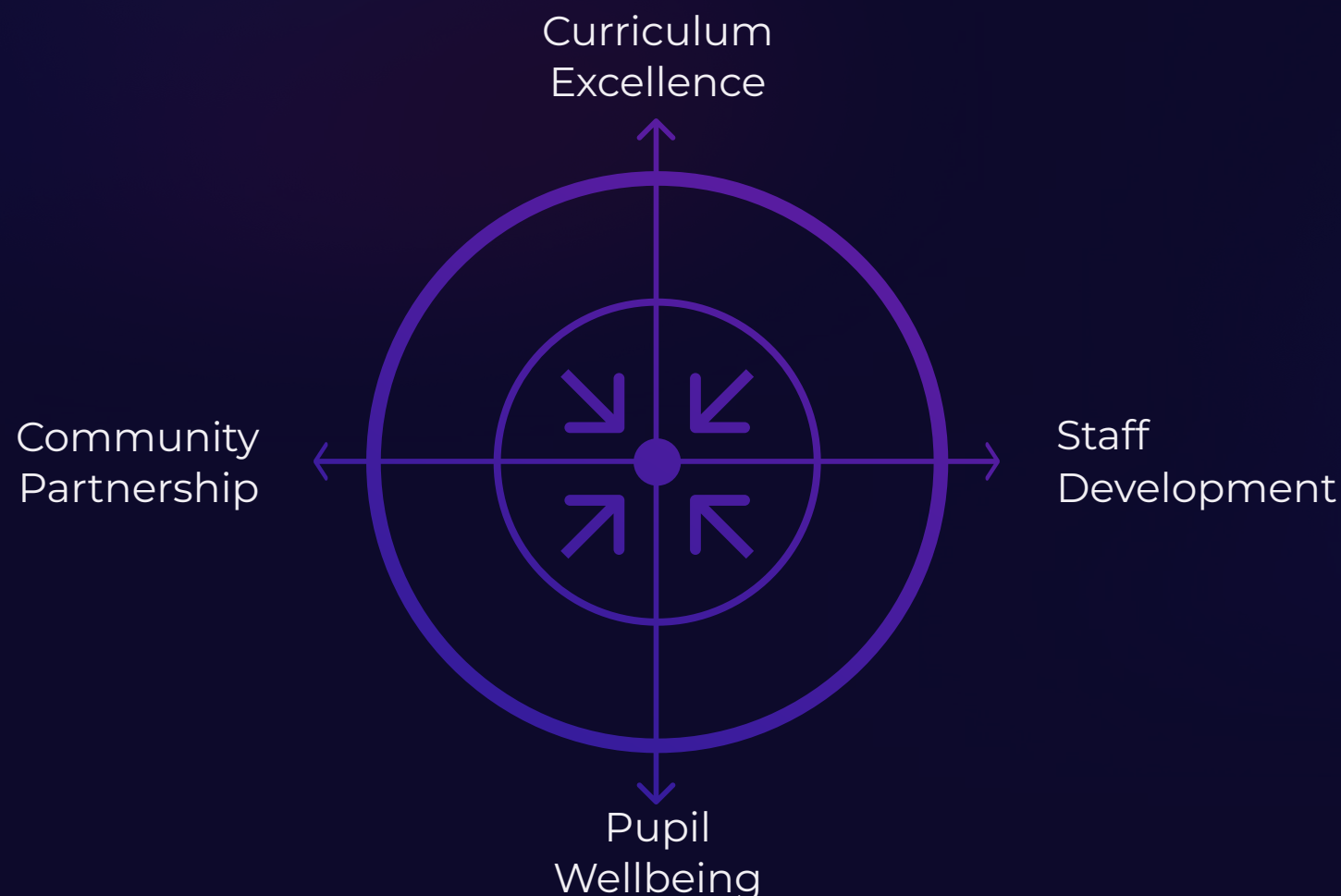


UNIVERSAL OFFER

The Trust has a universal offer which is the minimum school improvement offer that each school within the Trust will receive. All of our schools will be expected to engage with the Trust's Universal Offer and standardised approaches as outlined below.

The CEO 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 schools.

As a Trust, we expect that our schools will work in a collaborative way that supports improvement specific to each setting as well as growth and development as an effective team of schools. We believe that strong collaboration with shared accountability can lead to better progress and attainment for pupils and help all of the schools in our Trust.



Universal Offer: Professional Development & Leadership

Professional Development for all Staff

Annual Trust INSET Day (Spring 1)

External speakers and trainers to deliver CPD.

Half termly Heads and Deputies meeting focussing on key themes.

Bespoke internal training and support for all groups of staff across the Trust, as required.

A programme of professional development focussed on key priorities for our schools, as well as national priorities.

Opportunities for Trust facilitated sessions and visits to other schools for our Early Career Teachers.

The SEND strategy ensures training for all staff to support them to meet the needs of our pupils.

Leadership Development

Half termly individual Headteacher Meetings led by the Chief Executive Officer and the Chief Operations Officer focussing on a range of aspects of school, for example staffing, finance, building, financial position.

Termly Curriculum meetings led by the Trust Curriculum Leaders to promote collaborative working, share best practice, develop improvement programmes, discuss standards, plan staff development etc.

Termly Peer school improvement meetings lead by the School Improvement Director

Involvement in a Termly Review process, working alongside the School Improvement Director

Leadership Development programme for leaders at different levels, including NPQs, Assistant and Deputy Headteachers Network and an Aspiring Headteacher programme.

Instructional Coaching programme to develop our teachers into leaders of learning.

Mentoring for new Headteachers.

Governance Development

Expert governance is a key component of great schools and something we are keen to continue to develop across the Trust. We offer regular training for governors, virtually or face to face.

All governors have access to the National Governance Association's (NGA) Learning Link modules.

All governors have access to Learn Sheffield training and Governor Hub.

Termly development meetings for all the Chairs of Governors with the CEO, COO and Chair of the Trust Board.

Universal Offer: Support & Collaboration

Data Analysis

Reports from INSIGHT are shared with all schools following Trust wide assessments. These provide an opportunity for school leaders to benchmark attainment and progress for key cohorts against other schools across the Trust.

Review Cycle

Each school will take part in three data dashboard meetings across the academic year with the CEO, COO, Inclusion Lead and Director for School Improvement. These are timed to ensure reviews have taken place and can be discussed.

Support Development Visits

The CEO will visit each school fortnightly as a minimum for updates and focus visits.

The Central Team and the Trust Curriculum Leads will provide proportionate support to individual schools as required.

School to School Support

Staff may, on agreement, be deployed to other schools across the Trust for specific purposes.

Schools categorised as 'sustain' provide school to school support as required.

Support will be identified and brokered by the Chief Executive Officer.

Best practice is championed and shared across the Trust, identified by the Trust Curriculum Leads and the School Improvement Director.

Partnership Meetings

Termly Partnership Meetings bring together a range of professionals to enhance their practice, share and develop resources and ensure that curriculum areas and all aspects of our work are strong and continually developing in all schools:

- English (including Phonics and Early Reading)
 - Early Years
 - Mathematics
 - Curriculum
 - IR and Hubs
 - School Business Managers
- SEND
 - Instructional Coaches
 - Pupil Premium
 - Premises and Catering
 - Attendance
 - Trauma Informed



THE TIERED APPROACH

In order to direct our resources appropriately and provide an equitable improvement offer, all schools in the Trust will be annually assessed as to their current performance profile. This assessment will be agreed during a Data Dashboard meeting chaired by the Chief Executive Officer, Chief Operations Officer and will involve the Trust's School Improvement Director, Inclusion Lead and the school's senior leaders. During this meeting a range of information will be considered as part of the decision-making process including outcomes against key performance indicators, initial analysis of invalidated data including IDSR (where available), recent findings from external visits, the School Improvement Plan and the school's own self-evaluation. This assessment will be reviewed across the year and can be updated at any stage should circumstances change.

Where schools 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 schools to share their expertise for the good of the Trust and the wider education system as a whole.

Some schools may 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 CEO, School Improvement Director, Inclusion Lead, Trust Curriculum Leads alongside the other members of the wider School Improvement Team.

The Trust uses a tiered approach to categorise schools according to their level of need. Schools are allocated an improvement offer that is bespoke to their individual needs and requirements. The categories and level of support are explained below.

Key Pillars of School Improvement



Performance Assessment

Annual evaluation of school performance using key data, external findings, and self-evaluation to identify strengths and areas for growth.



Collaborative Support

Tailored interventions and resources provided to schools based on identified needs, fostering collaborative efforts for rapid progress.



Leadership Development

Empowering school leaders and staff through professional development and mentorship to build internal capacity for sustained improvement.

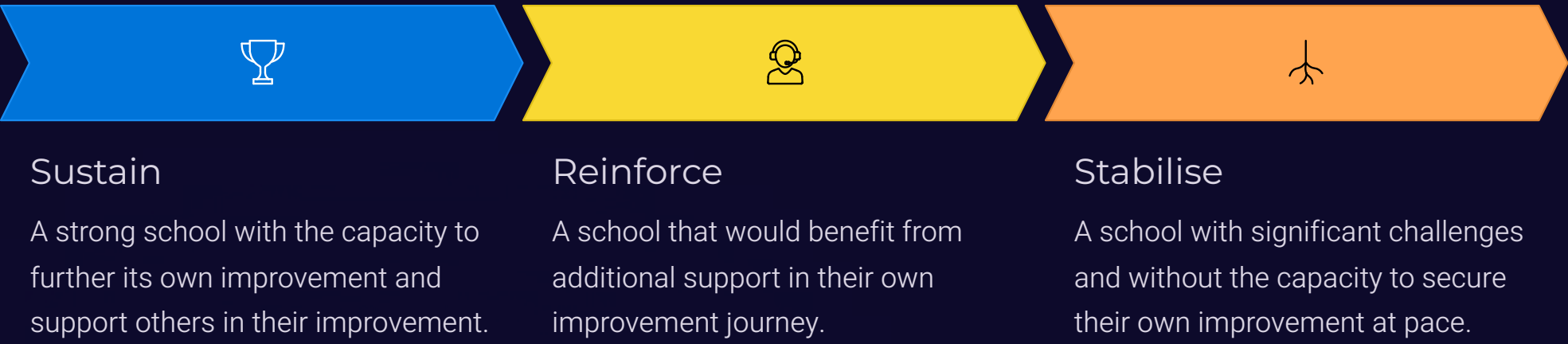


Student-Centric Outcomes

Focusing on equitable outcomes for all students, ensuring every learner receives the support needed to achieve their full potential.

Three Tiers of School Support

Schools are categorised into one of three tiers:



TIERED CRITERIA

Tier	Some Likely Key Features	Engagement
Sustain	Has the capacity to bring about improvement in their own school through a clear focus on what they need to achieve to become experts. Provides some support to others within the Trust. Accurately self-evaluates and prioritises next steps for improvement. Attainment and progress measures are likely to be at least average and improving over time in all key phases.	Termly Review visit led by School Improvement Director. Three School Improvement visits across the year from School Improvement Director. Full involvement in Head and Deputies meetings and the work of the Trust Curriculum Leads. Identified strengths in practice will be shared across the Trust. Termly Data Dashboard meetings
Reinforce	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 disadvantaged or SEN pupils and/or external attainment/progress outcomes. Attainment and progress measures are inconsistent and/or likely to be below average in a number of phases.	Termly Review visit led by School Improvement Director. Six Support and Development Visits across the year from the CEO and Director of School Improvement. Additional school to school support provided as necessary. Full involvement in Head and Deputies meetings and the work of the Trust Curriculum Leads. Conversations and regular meetings from CEO. Possibility of Consultant Headteacher support in place to secure rapid improvement. Termly Progress Meetings led by the Chief Executive Officer. School to move to "sustain" within 1 year to 18 months.
Stabilise	Attainment and progress measures in a number of phases are below average and showing no signs of sustained improvement. Limited capacity to promote rapid improvement. No clear or sustained focus on school improvement. No evidence of pace, urgency or sustained improvement. Morale and perception of school is low – high staff absence, falling pupil numbers. Need to improve rapidly within a given review period. Inaccurate or overly generous self-evaluation. Inadequate or consecutive Requires Improvement judgements.	Leadership support as appropriate. Executive Headteacher support in place to promote rapid improvement, if required. Expert teachers/coaches/Trust leaders to support and train. Termly Review visit led by the Director for School Improvement. A minimum of eight Support and Development Visits across the year from the CEO and Director of School Improvement. Additional school to school support provided as necessary. Termly quality assurance of pupil progress and attainment. External reviews, if required, including Governance, SEND and Pupil Premium. Support bought in from Learn Sheffield Consultants. Half termly Team Around the School Meetings involving the Chief Executive Officer, School Improvement Director, Chief Operations Officer, HR Advisor and Headteacher and Chair of Governors. If required, any additional direct intervention by the CEO. School to move to "reinforce" within 1 year.

 *Additional review or support visits are likely to be brokered for those schools who are due an imminent Ofsted inspection/ Monitoring Visit.

ALIGNED APPROACHES

The Trust expects the following strands of consistency across all schools:

Assessment & Target Setting

Consistent approach and format for Target Setting process.

Pupil progress and attainment tracking systems updated 3 times per year and shared with the CEO (INSIGHT is used by all schools).

Standardised assessments for Years 1 – 5 to be administered 3 times per year.

Termly analysis of data completed by the CEO and reported to Trust Board.

School Improvement Plan

Agreed format in place.

All SIPs will be quality assured as part of the School Improvement Director's work.

Curriculum Principles

Shared key principles for the curriculum which align with the Cascade vision.

Engage in Trust wide events.

Pupil Premium Strategy

Agreed and consistent format in place.

Sport Premium Report

Agreed and consistent format in place.

Self-Evaluation (SEF)

Agreed format in place.

SEFs will be quality assured as part of the Director of Education's work with all schools.

Local Governing Board Information

Agreed and consistent format in place for Headteacher's Report 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.

Termly Chairs of Governors meeting with the CEO and Chair of the Trust Board

REVIEW CYCLE

Our review cycle is designed so that individual aspects of a school's effectiveness are looked at in depth with school leaders, with clear actions identified and then support given to implement these. These visits aim to ensure accurate school self-evaluation and promote improvement in key areas. Each school will receive three visits across the academic year from the Director of School Improvement. All visits will be planned in cycle so there is time between these reviews to undertake meaningful improvement work.

Review visits will focus on:



Leadership and Management



Quality of Education



Quality of Early Years



Personal Development



Behaviour & Attitudes

The Termly Review will focus heavily on the Quality of Education and will always include an evaluation of Early Reading & Phonics, mathematics and the wider curriculum with at least two foundation subjects that will be evaluated in depth. Provision for pupils with SEND will also be a key focus of the review.



SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT

Headteachers provide support and development to each other. Areas for support and development are identified at Heads and Deputies meetings.

The primary focus of the review visits will be to support leaders in addressing the priorities identified in the School, the Improvement Plan as well as any recommendations arising from the Termly Reviews. The number of visits will directly link to a school's categorisation.