



## Trust Improvement Model

### Doing everything through Christ, who gives us strength *Philippians 4:13*

As a Trust, we know that schools joining us will be at different stages of their school improvement journey. Our ultimate aim is to ensure that all of our schools provide an excellent education for all pupils, enabling every member of the DSAT family to flourish.

Our vision for an excellent DSAT school aligns closely with our Trust vision.

**Growing** thriving Christian schools

**Enabling** all to flourish

**Serving** communities

**Collaborating** for excellence

This is supported by our Trust values of love, hope and joy.

### Rationale

Our improvement model aims to ensure that every school has the capacity to flourish and improve. There is much to celebrate in every school and we look to develop schools that are diverse and reflect the communities they serve. We embrace individuality and creativity. Where schools are demonstrating a high level of success and strong capacity for further improvement we want to enable them to continue this journey as well as sharing their expertise for the good of the wider Trust and the education system as a whole.

Each year, we work with our leaders to evaluate their current school improvement position. This can be revisited at any stage during the year should circumstances change. The categorisation of the school is confirmed at the end of each Academy Improvement Meeting (AIM). All schools receive a letter confirming their current category at the beginning of each academic year. The category and what this means should be shared with all governors and staff so that there is a shared awareness and understanding.

Evaluations of schools will be made considering information from visits undertaken during the year by Trust Officers, the Academy Improvement Team (AIT) as well as reports from the Church Schools Flourishing (CSF) team and other relevant data, including any external monitoring and moderation. If the Headteacher and Trust Officers disagree on the overall categorisation, the category given by the Deputy CEO will apply.

As a Trust, the children are at the heart of all we do; driven by our biblical underpinning, we aim to support all of our schools to provide the best possible outcomes for all of them and the Trust Improvement Model seeks to achieve this.

### The Academy Improvement Team

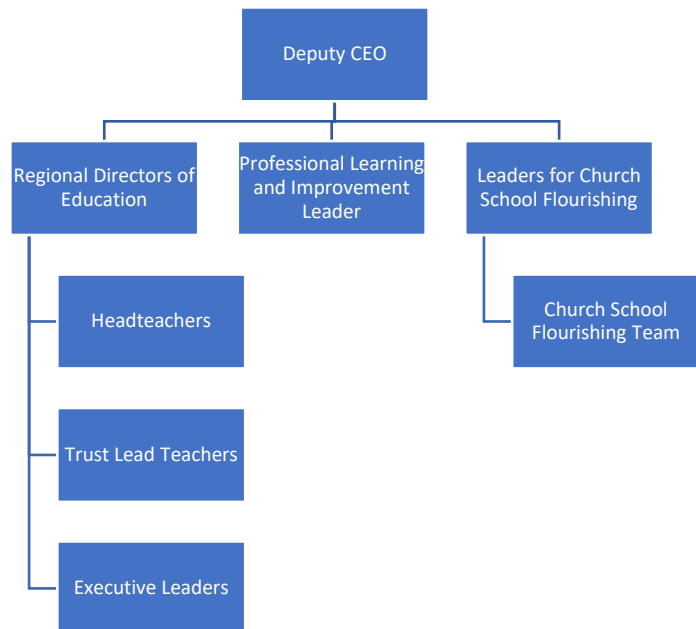
The Academy Improvement Team (AIT) is led by the Deputy Chief Executive Officer (DCEO). The Regional Directors of Education (RDEs) line manage our Headteachers including carrying out their annual appraisal. RDEs are linked to specific Hubs across our Trust and work with school leaders in that Hub through Academy Improvement Meetings (AIMs) in each school and to agree Hub improvement priorities and ensure collaborative working. They also have specific strategic leadership roles including core curriculum and Inclusion.

The Professional Learning and Improvement Leader (PLIL), along with the AIT, creates and leads Collaborative Professional Learning (CPL) and Curriculum Development for our Trust. The CPL is based on the priorities for improvement in the Trust strategic plan, priorities identified in our schools and in response to any national initiatives. The PLIL also works directly and intensively with schools on improvement priorities as directed by the DCEO and RDEs.

Executive Leaders and our Trust Lead Teachers (TLTs) are appointed as expert practitioners from across our schools. Executive Leaders and TLTs are deployed under the direction of the DCEO or RDEs to work in schools alongside leaders or individual teachers for an agreed period to support their journey of improvement.

Our Headteachers are also a key part of the AIT and we utilise their skills in several ways. Headteachers work alongside RDEs to carry out AIMs in other schools to share expertise as well as contributing to their professional learning.

The AIT are accountable to the Trust Board and report termly to the Trust Standards and Ethos Committee.



### Church School Flourishing Team

Our two Leaders for Church School Flourishing (LCSF) are also Headteachers. The wider team have been fully trained and are Headteachers and lead practitioners from across our schools as well as our Head of Governance and Compliance. The core purpose of the team is to support our school's work in ensuring the distinctive Christian vision, underpinned by its biblical foundation, is sustaining spiritual capital, enabling all pupils and adults to flourish.

### New Joiners

Schools joining the Trust will be at varying stages on their improvement journey. The AIT will begin working with the school as part of their due diligence visits and meetings. On, or in some cases prior to, joining the school will receive school improvement visits from the AIT to ensure that priorities for improvement are clear and that the school has the support needed to achieve these. The category of the school will be agreed and the Trust Improvement Model followed accordingly. If a school requires rapid improvement, an Executive Leader may be appointed to oversee this.

### New Headteachers

All Headteachers who are new to the role and/or new to the Trust will be assigned a mentor who is an experienced Headteacher within the Trust. An AIM will normally be carried out by the AIT to enable the new Headteacher to quickly understand the priorities for improvement and plan accordingly. The RDE who is linked to the school will maintain contact with the school every 3 weeks to follow up the initial AIM and provide support or guidance where needed. This will remain in place for at least the first two terms and longer if required.

### Academy Improvement Meetings (AIMs)

Academy Improvement Meetings (AIMs) take place in all schools and are typically led by the Hub RDE alongside a Headteacher colleague or another member of the AIT. The structure of the meeting is agreed by school leaders and the RDE and is broadly the same in all schools. Leaders of schools in Excellence or Refinement will take more of a leadership role in the day. The purpose of the meeting is to work alongside school leaders to evaluate, validate and strengthen to enable the flourishing of all staff and children. Following an AIM, leaders should have absolute clarity about the agreed priorities for continued improvement and how these can be achieved.

The AIM report will be written and shared with the CEO, Headteacher and Chair of the ASEC within two weeks of the AIM. The report should be shared at the next ASEC meeting and progress towards the actions should be kept under rigorous review by governors.

### Team Around the School Meetings

Schools that are in the Repair or Recovery categories will be invited to attend Team Around the School (TAS) meetings. Schools in Reinforcement may also be invited to attend TAS meetings depending on circumstances in the school. This will either be three or six times per year. The purpose of these meetings is to bring key people together to review the progress of the school in addressing the priorities for improvement. It is an opportunity to celebrate success, evaluate impact, identify any barriers, and establish any further support needs.

## CATEGORISATION

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTOR	EVIDENCE	SUPPORT / CHALLENGE
<b>Excellence</b>	An excellent school with the capacity to further its own improvement and support others in their improvement journey.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sharing best practice, committing to developing excellent teachers across the Trust and delivering school-to-school support within the Trust.</li> <li>• Continuing to develop and grow their own effectiveness.</li> <li>• Growing spiritual leadership at every level.</li> <li>• Deeply embedded vision and values that enable the flourishing of all</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 x AIM each year</li> <li>• Drop in visits by Trust officers to include tour of the school</li> <li>• 1 x CSF visit</li> <li>• 1 x RECWFL visit if required</li> <li>• Quality assure AIP priorities to ensure these are appropriate and will have the necessary impact.</li> <li>• Quality assure pupil progress and attainment</li> <li>• Additional support at the request of the school</li> <li>• Share best practice with other schools.</li> <li>• Utilise expertise across the Trust.</li> </ul>
<b>Refinement</b>	A good school that is on the journey to become excellent; it has the capacity in a number of areas to support other schools to become good.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have the capacity to bring about improvement in their own organisation through a clear focus on what they need to achieve to become excellent.</li> <li>• Providing some support to others within the Trust.</li> <li>• Able to accurately self-evaluate and prioritise next steps for improvement.</li> <li>• Strong spiritual leadership within SLT and other key leaders</li> <li>• Well established vision and values that enable the flourishing of all</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 x AIM each year</li> <li>• 1 x focused school improvement visit agreed with the school</li> <li>• Drop in visits by Trust officers to include tour of the school</li> <li>• 1 x CSF visit</li> <li>• 1 x RECWFL visit if required</li> <li>• Ensure AIP priorities are appropriate and having the necessary impact.</li> <li>• Quality assure pupil progress and attainment.</li> <li>• Focused support on identified area for improvement.</li> <li>• Share best practice with other schools</li> </ul>
<b>Reinforcement</b>	A school that has limited but developing capacity; a school that is working towards being categorised as 'good' or fully securing a 'good' judgement but where some areas are still not good enough.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Needing to demonstrate their capacity to bring about improvement quickly and effectively.</li> <li>• Leaders needing to engage with and act on support and advice from the Academy Improvement Team.</li> <li>• Where effective provision is not in place, need to adopt Trust approaches as directed by the Academy Improvement Team.</li> <li>• Headteacher provides spiritual leadership with others needing to demonstrate this further.</li> <li>• Vision and values are new and not yet impacting consistently in enabling all to flourish.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support from Academy Improvement Team to implement an agreed action plan with clear targets and timescales.</li> <li>• 3 x AIMS each year</li> <li>• One day support per fortnight support brokered by AIT</li> <li>• 1 x CSF visit with follow up support</li> <li>• 1 x RECWFL visit if required</li> <li>• Implement all DSAT curriculum, policies and practices</li> <li>• External reviews if required <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Governance</li> <li>- Inclusion</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Support to create a robust and rigorous Academy Improvement Plan</li> <li>• Team Around the School meetings if identified as a requirement</li> <li>• Secure quality first teaching</li> <li>• Rapidly raise attainment and accelerate progress</li> </ul>

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTOR	EVIDENCE	SUPPORT / CHALLENGE
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan to improve attendance</li> <li><b>School to move to Refinement within 18 months.</b></li> </ul>
<b>Recovery</b>	A school with limited capacity and key areas which require swift improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Standards and expectations are low.</li> <li>No clear and sustained focus on school improvement.</li> <li>Morale and perception of school is low – high absence, falling pupil numbers.</li> <li>Needing to improve rapidly within a given Review Period.</li> <li>Leaders needing to engage with and act on the support and advice from the Academy Improvement Team.</li> <li>Some evidence of spiritual leadership but this is yet to impact consistently on church school distinctiveness</li> <li>Vision and values are outdated/inappropriate or not impacting positively on the flourishing of all.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of standards/curriculum</li> <li>Review of EYFS provision</li> <li>Review of Pupil Premium Strategy*</li> <li>Review of Governance*</li> <li>Review of SEND*</li> <li>6 weekly Rapid Action Plans</li> <li>Direction and support from AIT to implement agreed action plans (1 day per week minimum initially)</li> <li>TLT support as required</li> <li>1 x CSF visit with follow up support</li> <li>1 x RECWFL visit with follow up support</li> <li>Implement all DSAT curriculum, policies and practices</li> <li>Clearly defined and focused CPL</li> <li>Governor training</li> <li>3 x AIMS per year</li> <li>Minimum of 3 x Team Around the School support and challenge meetings</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">* if deemed necessary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>School to move to Reinforcement within 1 year</b></li> </ul>
<b>Repair</b>	A school with significant shortcomings and without the capacity to secure their own improvement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As for the category above.</li> <li>Requiring rapid and direct intervention to implement improvement strategies.</li> <li>Little or no spiritual leadership. Vision and values are not known or shared and do not enable all to flourish.</li> <li>See also Appendix 1.</li> </ul>	<p>As Recovery and Direct Intervention to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Secure effective senior leadership</li> <li>Establish a clear, shared vision</li> <li>Establish school values that are shared, known and lived out by all</li> <li>Implement a robust and rigorous Academy Improvement Plan and monitoring and evaluation schedule, underpinned by 6 weekly Rapid Action Plans</li> <li>Devise and implement a programme of CPL for all staff</li> <li>Ensure that leadership at all levels can bring about sustained improvement</li> <li>Secure quality first teaching</li> <li>Rapidly raise standards of attainment and accelerate progress</li> </ul> <p>Implement all or some of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approved SSP</li> <li>Mastery approach in all subjects</li> <li>Structured Early Years curriculum</li> <li>DSAT Curriculum documents</li> <li>Behaviour curriculum</li> <li>Attendance plan</li> <li><b>School to move to Recovery within 1 year</b></li> </ul>

## Appendix 1 - Factors that may lead to a school being placed in a category of Repair or Recovery.

It is likely that a combination of these factors would lead to a school being categorised as Recovery or Repair.

### Outcomes

- School progress scores for Reading, Writing or Maths are in the lower quartile in comparison with the national distribution and declining.
- There is poor value-added overall or a trend of significant poor progress in a subject.
- KS2 combined attainment is below the national average for the current year and declining.
- End of EYFSP or KS1 outcomes have been low/below national for the last 2 years or are predicted to be so.
- There is significant variation between those who are entitled to the Pupil Premium and others and the difference is not diminishing.
- Analysis of the outcomes for other vulnerable groups identifies significant concerns where gaps are widening and there is significant lack of progress for specific groups.
- Evidence from scrutiny of children's work and pupil conferencing indicates that the school curriculum is not impacting on their ability to know, do and remember more. Furthermore, children are not able to articulate or demonstrate the impact of the RE curriculum, school values or Collective Worship in enabling them to flourish and grow.
- Attendance is below the national average range and is either declining or not improving over time.
- Persistent absence is increasing.
- Suspension rates are rising.

### Capacity to improve and sustain improvement

- There have been significant changes in academy leadership or staffing (including higher than expected rates of staff absence or illness) which have weakened or constrained the capacity of the leadership team to achieve the impact needed on pupil outcomes.
- The effectiveness of the Academy Standards and Ethos Committee (ASEC) has been affected by significant changes; current evaluation is that Governors are not providing the critical challenge necessary to assist the academy in reaching its targets.
- The performance management process is not embedded and/or does not inform development and support for improvement.
- Quality of teaching and education in the school is not yet consistently impacting positively on outcomes and the school has not been able to assure consistency. School processes or staff capability in challenging and supporting the required improvement in teaching are insufficient.
- There is a high number of requests for assessment from external agencies. The school is not meeting its statutory responsibilities for SEN/Disability including admissions.
- Pupil numbers are declining, or the academy is not meeting its PAN due to reputational concerns.
- Evaluation of behaviour and safety/safeguarding indicates a decline.
- Annual safeguarding audit indicates a significant number of areas that require addressing.
- SIAMS report and/or self-evaluation indicates a J2 grading.
- Pupil/parent/staff surveys indicate a high level of dissatisfaction in significant areas. Parental complaints are increasing or escalating.

If capacity to improve rapidly is not demonstrated, the CEO and Trust Board will need to intervene directly.

Schools may require more direct intervention under the following circumstances:

- a) Any school is in material breach of the agreements as set out in the Articles;
- b) Any school is in material breach of its Funding Agreement with the Department for Education (DFE);
- c) Any school has, or is likely to have, an unfunded deficit budget (revenue and/or capital), or there is serious concern about its financial control processes, suspected fraud or fraud;
- d) Any serious (as deemed by the Trust) safeguarding matter;
- e) OFSTED officially grading any school to be in a category of concern;
- f) The Trust, acting reasonably and having obtained considered evidence, is of the opinion that a school is likely at the next assessment to be graded by OFSTED (or any successor body) as in a category of concern.

## Appendix 2 – Characteristics of Schools

Category	Likely Characteristics	Support and Challenge
Excellence	<p><b>Children who:</b> Attend and achieve consistently well both academically and spiritually.</p> <p><b>Leaders who:</b> Lead and live out their theologically rooted Christian vision, enable all adults and children to flourish. Advocate for others, share expertise and support others, are relentless in their pursuit of excellence.</p> <p><b>Teachers and other staff who:</b> Prioritise and have ambitious, high expectations for the academic and spiritual flourishing of all pupils.</p> <p><b>Governors who:</b> Strategically support and challenge, are proactive, know the school well, ensure a culture where everyone is treated well.</p> <p><b>A curriculum which:</b> Embodies the theologically rooted Christian vision, is well designed and curated, is interesting and stimulating with carefully crafted, context driven enrichment.</p> <p><b>An ethos which:</b> Is firmly rooted in Christian vision and values, underpinned by the biblical foundation of the school. Is inclusive by design and prepares children exceptionally well for global stewardship.</p>	<p><b>Support to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality assure the schools own self-evaluation</li> <li>• Improve identified areas as required and retain Excellence status</li> <li>• Ensure school structures and systems serve all children exceptionally well</li> <li>• Embed a culture that goes beyond the strengths of its individual members</li> </ul> <p><b>Challenge to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generously give capacity to support the flourishing of others</li> <li>• Drive and add to Hub improvement work</li> <li>• Network widely with others in the Trust/Hub</li> <li>• Support subject communities across the Trust and within their Hub</li> <li>• Share and develop best practice</li> <li>• Engage in research led enquiry</li> <li>• Engage skilled staff in supporting and delivering programmes e.g. NPQs, ECF</li> </ul>
Refinement	<p><b>Children who:</b> Attend and achieve well both academically and spiritually.</p> <p><b>Leaders who:</b> Show strong commitment to the theologically rooted Christian vision and promote this in their approach to school culture and responsibility. Share expertise and support others in specific areas.</p> <p><b>Teachers and other staff who:</b> Prioritise and have high expectations for the academic and spiritual flourishing of all pupils.</p> <p><b>Governors who:</b> Support and challenge, are proactive, know the school well and ensure a culture where everyone is treated well.</p> <p><b>A curriculum which:</b> Reflects the theologically rooted Christian vision, has a clear intent, is well designed and implemented, is interesting and stimulating with well planned, relevant enrichment opportunities.</p> <p><b>An ethos which:</b> Is firmly rooted in Christian vision and values, underpinned by the biblical foundation of the school. Is inclusive, prepares children for global stewardship.</p>	<p><b>Support to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality assure the schools own self-evaluation</li> <li>• Make necessary improvements to secure high outcomes for all children</li> <li>• Ensure school structures and systems serve all children well</li> <li>• Strive for Excellence</li> </ul> <p><b>Challenge to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide some school improvement support in other schools</li> <li>• Take part and add to Hub improvement work</li> <li>• Network widely with others in the Trust/Hub</li> <li>• Support subject communities across the Trust and within their Hub</li> <li>• Share best practice with colleagues</li> <li>• Look beyond the school to challenge current practice and engage in research projects</li> </ul>
Reinforcement	<p><b>Children who:</b> Mostly attend well; achievement both academically and spiritually is improving.</p> <p><b>Leaders who:</b> Are establishing a theologically rooted Christian vision. Articulate ambition for all and know what to do to achieve this.</p> <p><b>Teachers who:</b> Are committed to the academic and spiritual flourishing of all pupils and know their role in this.</p>	<p><b>Support to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Address areas for improvement needed through the academy improvement plan.</li> <li>• Self-evaluate to identify areas for improvement</li> <li>• Provide the necessary CPL for staff</li> <li>• Broker further support from other sources including other DSAT schools</li> </ul> <p><b>Challenge to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve to Refinement 1 yr – 18 months</li> </ul>

Category	Likely Characteristics	Support and Challenge
	<p><b>Governors who:</b> Proactively provide support and challenge, know the school well, ensure a culture where everyone is treated well.</p> <p><b>A curriculum which:</b> Increasingly reflects the theologically rooted Christian vision, has a clear intent, implementation is growing in consistency with a wide range of enrichment opportunities.</p> <p><b>An ethos which:</b> Is based on Christian values, is inclusive and teaches global citizenship.</p>	<p><b>Support and Challenge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify strengths within the school and move to a position where this can be shared more widely</li> <li>• Utilise Hub improvement work to strengthen the school</li> <li>• Network with others in the Trust/Hub</li> <li>• Benefit from subject communities across the Trust and within their Hub</li> </ul>
Recovery	<p><b>Children who:</b> Must improve attendance and achieve better outcomes academically and spiritually.</p> <p><b>Leaders who:</b> Are beginning to prioritise and promote the theologically rooted Christian vision. Know the school improvement priorities and work with the Trust to plan to address them.</p> <p><b>Teachers and other staff who:</b> Know that the academic and spiritual flourishing of all pupils is their responsibility. Are developing higher expectations, understand and want to improve.</p> <p><b>Governors who:</b> Support the work of the school, are beginning to challenge and hold leaders to account, know the school well.</p> <p><b>A curriculum which:</b> May reflect the school's Christian vision and values. Covers the range of subjects with clear intent but lacks cohesion and consistency. Interests, and engages the children with enrichment opportunities.</p> <p><b>An ethos which:</b> Is based on Christian values, is inclusive and promotes global citizenship.</p>	<p><b>Support to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bring about rapid improvement needed through the development of the academy improvement plan underpinned by rapid action plans.</li> <li>• Address weaknesses in teaching and learning</li> <li>• Provide the necessary CPL for staff and governors</li> <li>• Improve the learning environment</li> <li>• Improve behaviour and attendance</li> <li>• Broker further support from other sources where necessary</li> </ul> <p><b>Challenge to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve to Reinforcement within 1 year</li> <li>• Utilise Hub improvement work to strengthen the school</li> <li>• Network with others in the Trust/Hub</li> <li>• Benefit from subject communities across the Trust and within their Hub</li> </ul>
Repair	<p><b>Children who:</b> Must improve attendance and achieve better outcomes academically and spiritually.</p> <p><b>Leaders who:</b> Recognise a need to establish Christian vision and values. Know some school improvement priorities but rely on the Trust to implement, seek additional support/advice but do not always act on it, want the best for the children but do not know how to achieve this.</p> <p><b>Teachers and other staff who:</b> Have not yet understood the need for or how to prioritise the academic and spiritual flourishing of all pupils. See that improvement is needed but do not know how to achieve this.</p> <p><b>Governors who:</b> Care about and support the work of the school, focus on systems and processes rather than accountability, have limited knowledge of strengths and weaknesses.</p> <p><b>A curriculum which:</b> Does not reflect a theologically rooted Christian vision. Covers all subjects but lacks cohesion, design and intent, does not impact on outcomes. Enrichment is activity rather than learning led.</p> <p><b>An ethos which:</b> Makes reference to Christian vision and values, is caring and nurturing.</p>	<p>As Recovery and:</p> <p><b>Support to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement proven schemes, systems and resources that will improve outcomes for children</li> <li>• Secure effective leadership to bring about rapid change</li> </ul> <p><b>Challenge to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop processes of school improvement that are sustainable</li> <li>• Improve to Recovery within 1 year</li> <li>• Utilise Hub improvement work to strengthen the school</li> <li>• Network with others in the Trust/Hub</li> <li>• Benefit from subject communities across the Trust and within their Hub</li> </ul>