





Trust Vision				HCAT TRUST DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN												
				Educate, Empower, Inspire												
Purpose:																
School Improvement – Leadership and Organisational Development				High Quality and Inclusive Education Quality of Education			Governance and Leadership C - Strategic Governance			Finance and Operations D - Finance and Operations			Workforce E - Workforce and Talent Development			
Intent				Intent			Intent			Intent			Intent			
Strategic Goals	Leadership and Organisational Development: Ensure the trust has a clear understanding of the current position of each school to deploy support effectively. Increase capacity in senior leadership positions across the trust. Implement a clear program for improvement and professional development.			Quality of Education: Ensure consistent approaches across the primary schools within the trust to the teaching of broader literacy skills, including the application of basic skills, spelling, handwriting, and writing at greater depth.			Strategic Governance: To ensure robust oversight of educational performance, financial health, and risk management across all academies.			Finance and Operations: Ensure all schools within the Trust meet the DfE Digital Standards, achieving high levels of digital readiness and compliance. Finance and Operations: Maintain high standards of financial accountability, transparency, and compliance with the Academies Handbook.			Workforce and Talent Development: To embed AI more deeply and strategically into everyday practices across the Trust, focusing on sustainable workload reduction, enhanced teaching strategies, and greater staff confidence in using AI tools. This year's focus will shift from early adoption to system-wide consolidation, impact evaluation, and the creation of scalable, ethical models of AI integration that promote professional growth and organisational efficiency.			
	Leadership and Organisational Development: HCAT continues to expand as a trust, consistently enhancing the performance of its schools and contributing to improvements across the broader educational landscape.			Quality of Education: Ensure that all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or have SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities), achieve strong outcomes from their starting points. Continue to address the needs of SEND pupils effectively, collaborating closely with stakeholders to ensure adequate resources and support are in place.			Strategic Governance: Governors at all level are assured in relation to the ongoing improvement of schools.			Finance and Operations: Embed sustainable practices across all Trust schools, aligning with the DfE Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy to reduce environmental impact, promote climate education, and support long-term ecological responsibility. Finance and Operations: Refining Risk Management to Strengthen Strategic Oversight and Educational Impact.			Workforce and Talent Development: To move from a foundation of support and engagement to a culture of empowerment and shared ownership. This includes enhancing staff well-being, promoting equity of experience across all roles and settings, expanding leadership development opportunities, and using data to inform sustainable improvements in workforce morale, capability, and retention.			
	Leadership and Organisational Development: Work together with the wider education community to guarantee that students in schools beyond HCAT benefit from a high-quality education by sharing best practices and providing ongoing support.			Quality of Education: The HCAT curriculum is designed to promote strong outcomes for every student.						Finance and Operations: Further develop and implement a Trust-wide estates strategy that ensures all school sites are safe, compliant, fit-for-purpose, and environmentally responsible. The strategy will align with national standards, support efficient resource use, and create learning environments that promote pupil wellbeing, inclusion, and sustainability. It will also strengthen governance oversight of estates, health and safety, and capital investment planning.			Workforce and Talent Development: To ensure that all HR processes—particularly those related to performance, compliance, and staff support—are consistently and effectively applied across the Trust.			
Input	Evaluation	Risk Assessments	Organisation	Analysis	Feedback	Evaluation	Values	Vision	Behaviours	Evaluation	Forecasting	Investment	Innovation	Continuous Improvement	Talent Development	Input
	Analysis	Reflection	Monitoring	Quality	Research	Collaboration	Structures	Commitment	Collaboration	Review	Development	Reporting	Collaboration	Technology	Equality & Diversity	
	Feedback	Time	Leadership	Teaching and Learning	Time	Innovation	Governance	Decision Making	Time	Resource	Time	Planning	Research	Flexible	Time	
HCAT Vision				"Educate, Empower, Inspire"												
HCAT Values				"Transforming Futures Together: Empowering Learners, Enriching Communities"												
In our Multi Academy Trust, our vision is to Educate, Empower, and Inspire. We strive to provide a transformative educational experience that equips every student with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to excel in an ever-evolving world. Through our commitment to excellence, collaboration, and innovation, we are dedicated to fostering a dynamic learning community where students, staff, and partners are empowered to thrive and contribute meaningfully to society.																

Trust Improvement and Development Priority - 1				Leadership			<div>Date:</div> <div></div>			
DFE Trust Quality Descriptors	MAT CEO Framework	Driver	Intent	Implementation	Strategic Priority	Lead	Key Dates/Milestones		Impact & Evaluation	RAG
School Improvement	A – Leadership and Organisational Development	Ensure there is adequate leadership capacity to support trust growth at all levels while maintaining an effective School Improvement program.	Ensure the trust has a clear understanding of the current position of each school to deploy support effectively. Increase capacity in senior leadership positions across the trust. Implement a clear program for improvement and professional development.	Autumn Conduct risk assessments for all schools within the trust. Establish brokerage agreements for each school based on the risk assessment findings. Complete Autumn term CPD (Continuing Professional Development), including network days aligned with trust priorities. Conduct performance management reviews for leaders across the trust. Deliver the Aspirant Leaders program. Hold KIT (Keep In Touch) and leadership meetings as scheduled. Complete SER (School Evaluation Review) processes and implement identified actions for the Spring term. Perform moderation activities to ensure the accuracy of judgments.	1. Developing and Delivering a High-Quality Education	CEO DofT&L	Sep-25	Dec-25	How well has the issue been met? What evidence is there to prove it?	
				CEO DofT&L		Jan-26	Apr-26			
				CEO DofT&L		May-26	Jul-26			
		Drive transformation and growth by creating continuous development opportunities for HCAT and supporting the wider sector in achieving similar advancements.	HCAT continues to expand as a trust, consistently enhancing the performance of its schools and contributing to improvements across the broader educational landscape.	Ongoing To support the ongoing onboarding of TMA, WMP, QRA & DPS. Ensure that HCAT curriculum and systems are in place. Complete RA in line with HCAT schools and complete onging Evaluation Process. Work with the IEB of SLPS to convert to Sponsored Academy - Time phase implementation of HCAT curriculum. Ensure rigour around monitoring and evaluation is in place.	2. Growth and Collaboration	CEO Exec Leaders DCEO CFO	Sep-25	Dec-25		
		Collaborate with the broader education sector to ensure that students in schools outside of HCAT receive a high-quality education.	Work together with the wider education community to guarantee that students in schools beyond HCAT benefit from a high-quality education by sharing best practices and providing ongoing support.	Ongoing To continue to work in partnership with Barnsley Schools Alliance to design and deliver a Continual Professional Development package that addresses local priorities to raise educational standards across the borough. To continue to collaborate with TEP to deliver the ECF/AB, promote NPQs and to grow our ITT provision across the South Yorkshire region - with a particular drive on local marketing to tackle the teacher recruitment crisis. To apply to become an Apprenticeship provider, creating an additional income generation stream and enabling a professional development pathway for support staff. To begin to develop a workforce and talent development department for HCAT - identifying, signposting and providing professional development for both teaching and support staff, increasing self efficacy and staff retention. Promote HCAT as the employer of choice, using staff benefits and employee feedback to market recruitment opportunities, ensuring HCAT has a positive high profile in the local area and has sufficient volumes of applicants to choose from when vacancies arise.	2. Growth and Collaboration	Tom Banham DofT&L	Sep-25	Jul-26		

Trust Improvement and Development Priority - 2				Quality of Education			<div>Date:</div> <div></div>				
DFE Trust Quality Descriptors	MAT CEO Framework	Driver	Intent	Implementation	Strategic Priority	Lead	Key Dates/Milestones		Impact & Evaluation		RAG
High quality and Inclusive Education	B – Quality of Education	Ensure consistent approaches across the primary schools within the trust to the teaching of broader literacy skills, including the application of basic skills, spelling, handwriting, and writing at greater depth.	High-quality curriculum delivery and effective teaching and learning practices are in place, resulting in strong outcomes for students.	Autumn Conduct a thorough QLA (Quality of Learning Assessment) of primary outcomes to identify significant gaps, and determine if any of these gaps affect vulnerable groups. Utilise the SLA (Service Level Agreement) to create a cross-trust CPD (Continuing Professional Development) program based on the QLA and key outcomes, and complete a trust-wide quality assurance process, including writing moderation, work scrutiny, and lesson observations.	1. Developing and Delivering a High-Quality Education	CEO DCEO DofT&L	Sep-25	Dec-25			
				Ongoing Review and implement brokerage agreements with the Directors of Teaching & Learning (DofT&L) and school leaders. Facilitate network days. Provide tailored CPD to support individual schools on a case-by-case basis.			Sep-25	Jul-26			
		Growing numbers and increasing complexity of SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) students across the trust.	Ensure that all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or have SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities), achieve strong outcomes from their starting points. Continue to address the needs of SEND pupils effectively, collaborating closely with stakeholders to ensure adequate resources and support are in place.	Ongoing Continue regular SEND KIT meetings - to support the induction of new schools and new SENDCos Identify and prioritize SEND needs across the trust. Provide additional support for new SENCos. Offer ongoing CPD (Continuing Professional Development) for SENCos. Conduct regular reviews and quality assurance of SEND Support Plans (SSPs).	1. Developing and Delivering a High-Quality Education	DofSEND	Sep-25	Jul-26			
		To ensure that the curriculum for HCAT pupils effectively addresses the needs of every student.	The HCAT curriculum is designed to promote strong outcomes for every student.	Autumn Create a professional development program to support schools throughout all phases of their improvement journey. Review and update the Trust’s Teaching and Learning SharePoint to accurately reflect current school-level delivery. Implement the “New to HCAT” program, organise Network Days, and run the Aspirant Leaders program. Evaluate the quality of the curriculum as part of the ongoing SER. Update the Professional Development curriculum in accordance with new guidance. Further develop trust-wide resources for Physical Education (PE). Review the assessment practices for foundation subjects.			2. Growth and Collaboration	CEO DofT&L			Sep-25
				Ongoing Based on the findings from evaluation processes in the Autumn term, implement any necessary trust-wide priorities or adjustments to the curriculum. Review the curriculum to ensure it aligns with the National Curriculum and adheres to the latest DfE (Department for Education) guidelines.	Sep-25	Jul-26					

Trust Improvement and Development Priority - 4				Finance and Operations		Date:				
DfE Trust Quality Descriptors	MAT CEO Framework	Driver	Intent	Implementation	Strategic Priority	Lead	Key Dates/Milestones		Impact & Evaluation	RAG
							Start Point	End Point	How well has the issue been met? What evidence is there to prove it?	
Finance and Operations	D - Finance and Operations	Enhanced Digital Compliance and Infrastructure	Ensure all schools within the Trust meet the DfE Digital Standards, achieving high levels of digital readiness and compliance.	Autumn Update the digital infrastructure audit using the latest DfE standards and the Trust's digital development rubric. Reassess each school's current status in areas including cybersecurity protocols, device adequacy, broadband reliability, cloud services usage, and staff/student digital fluency. Collate findings into a Trust-wide dashboard to inform prioritisation of funding, training, and support. In parallel, begin working with TGE solutions and Secure Schools, who have been commissioned to support the Trust's digital security strategy. TGE solutions will provide training to digital leads across the trust and will provide audits on meeting digital standards. Secure schools will provide a cyber security audit of 3 primary schools and our secondary school. Schools will use the secure schools system policy builder system.	4. Empowering Digital Transformation	Victoria Harrison / Andrew Ravenscroft / David Wakefield	Sep-25	Dec-25		
				Spring Address priority areas identified in the audit, such as device refresh cycles, patching and security compliance, and accessibility improvements. Secure Schools will support schools with cyber security audits, penetration testing, and vulnerability scanning to simulate real-life threats and strengthen our digital defences			Jan-26	Apr-26		
				Summer Develop a long-term digital infrastructure strategy to support scalability and sustainability. This includes a centralised procurement framework, support model, and roadmap for future innovations (e.g. AI integration, adaptive learning platforms). Alongside this, introduce a Trust-wide 3-year IT refresh cycle, ensuring clarity around ownership of both capital need and budget responsibility. Each school will map out projected device and infrastructure requirements over the cycle, linked to educational delivery and digital compliance standards. This model will help the Trust plan future investments more proactively and ensure equitable, sustainable digital provision across all settings.			May-26	Jul-26		
		Continued Compliance with the Academies Handbook	Maintain high standards of financial accountability, transparency, and compliance with the Academies Handbook.	Autumn Conduct a review of existing financial policies and procedures against the latest Academy Trust Handbook to ensure full compliance with current regulatory requirements. Update policies where necessary and communicate changes to relevant stakeholders to support consistent financial governance across the Trust. Review existing staff roles and responsibilities to identify any gaps, overlaps, or risks related to absence or capacity. Develop a succession plan to ensure continuity in key roles and introduce opportunities for cross-training and upskilling to build a more flexible and resilient workforce.		Victoria Harrison / Andrew Ravenscroft	Sep-25	Dec-25		
				Ongoing Develop further the systems for monitoring budget performance and conducting variance analysis, ensuring that school leaders and central teams have access to timely, accurate financial data. Explore the use of Power BI and automation tools to streamline the production of statutory Monthly Management Accounts, improving both efficiency and transparency. Prepare thoroughly for annual external audits by engaging auditors early in the process, addressing any emerging issues proactively, and ensuring all financial documentation is audit-ready. Prepare and engage with the internal scrutiny programme. Share the key areas with exec heads and SBMs so that schools can prepare. Develop a culture of self evaluation in terms of finance processes so that the trust is looking to be proactive rather than reactive.			Sep-25	Jul-26		
		Responding to the Department for Education's national strategy by embedding environmental sustainability into the Trust's operations, culture, and curriculum—ensuring all schools contribute to a greener, more climate resilient future.	Embed sustainable practices across all Trust schools, aligning with the DfE Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy to reduce environmental impact, promote climate education, and support long-term ecological responsibility.	Ongoing Embed sustainability practices consistently across all schools, ensuring estates, operations, and curriculum align with the HCAT Strategic Climate and Sustainability Plan and the DfE Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy. Conduct regular reviews of energy use, waste, and biodiversity across the estate, using this data to inform investment decisions and track progress towards net zero targets. Integrate sustainability criteria into procurement and supply chain management, prioritising suppliers with strong environmental credentials and supporting circular economy approaches. Strengthen climate education across the curriculum and extracurricular activities, providing pupils with meaningful opportunities to engage in sustainability initiatives and develop green skills. Engage staff and pupils in sustainability awareness campaigns, promoting a culture of environmental responsibility throughout the Trust. Develop governance and accountability structures to ensure sustainability progress is monitored at both Trust and school level, with annual reporting to Trustees. Promote HCAT's sustainability work within local communities and the wider education sector, positioning the Trust as a leader in environmental responsibility and climate action.	3. Sustainability and Environmental Responsibility 3. Sustainability and Environmental Responsibility 3. Sustainability and Environmental Responsibility	Victoria Harrison / Ash Clark / Executive Leaders Victoria Harrison / Ash Clark / Executive Leaders Victoria Harrison / Ash Clark / Executive Leaders	Sep-25	Dec-25		
				Jan-26			Apr-26			
				May-26			Jul-26			
		Refining Risk Management to Strengthen Strategic Oversight and Educational Impact	Refining Risk Management to Strengthen Strategic Oversight and Educational Impact.	Autumn Undertake a full review of the current Trust and individual school risk registers to identify duplication, overlap, or inconsistencies. Streamline risk descriptions and categories to improve clarity and alignment across schools and central teams. Reassess archived risks, distinguishing between those that are no longer relevant and those that should be flagged for future monitoring due to potential re-emergence. Assess the impact of newly onboarded schools on wider Trust risk and resilience—specifically in areas of staffing, leadership capacity, pupil outcomes, and integration with Trust systems. Use this to inform risk mitigation planning for the upcoming academic year. Spring Begin incorporating educational risks into the central risk register, using SATs, GCSE, and attendance data to identify performance-related risk areas, particularly in schools that have recently joined the Trust. Include risk themes around curriculum delivery, quality of teaching, and leadership capacity. Develop a Trust-wide template and guidance for identifying and articulating educational risks to support consistency. Embed regular discussion of educational risk in leadership team meetings alongside operational risk reviews.	1. Developing and Delivering a High-Quality Education 3. Sustainability and Environmental Responsibility 3. Sustainability and Environmental Responsibility	Victoria Harrison / Andrew Ravenscroft / Ellie Laight / Ash Clark	Sep-25	Dec-25		
				Summer Finalise and implement a streamlined risk reporting format for the Trust Board, ensuring risk narratives are accessible, action-oriented, and linked to measurable outcomes. Conduct a mid-year review of educational risk indicators to ensure they remain relevant, especially in schools undergoing rapid change or growth. The risk register will be discussed at each audit and risk committee meeting and will be used as the main resource to design the internal scrutiny plan for the following year.			Jan-26	Apr-26		
				May-26			Jul-26			
		Strengthening Estates Strategy, Compliance and Sustainability	Further develop and implement a Trust-wide estates strategy that ensures all school sites are safe, compliant, fit-for-purpose, and environmentally responsible. The strategy will align with national standards, support efficient resource use, and create learning environments that promote pupil wellbeing, inclusion, and sustainability. It will also strengthen governance oversight of estates, health and safety, and capital investment planning.	Ongoing Focus on developing a comprehensive five-year Estates Masterplan. This plan will align school-level condition survey data with curriculum delivery needs, pupil place planning, and long-term capital investment. The Estates Masterplan will act as a strategic document to guide future decision-making and support funding bids. Alongside this, the Trust will review how estates-related risks are presented and escalated within governance structures, ensuring they are clearly reflected in the central Risk Register and reported in a consistent, RAG-rated format to the Trust Board. Conduct with a formal Estates Review, benchmarking the Trust's estates practice against the School Estate Management Standards and DfE performance expectations. This will include review of compliance metrics (e.g. percentage of sites with up-to-date statutory documentation), sustainability indicators (e.g. energy usage per square metre and carbon emissions per site), and workforce capability (e.g. proportion of trained site and estates staff). The outcomes of this review will inform the 2026–2029 strategic planning cycle and ensure the Trust remains ahead of evolving national expectations in estates and sustainability leadership. Within the budget planning cycle, discussions will take place around how to effectively use reserves, SCA funding and DfC to support the five-year estates strategy.	1. Developing and Delivering a High-Quality Education 3. Sustainability and Environmental Responsibility	Victoria Harrison / Andrew Ravenscroft / Ellie Laight / Ash Clark	Sep-25	Jul-26		

Trust Improvement and Development Priority - 5				Workforce			<div>Date:</div> <div></div>				
DFE Trust Quality Descriptors	MAT CEO Framework	Driver	Intent	Implementation	Strategic Priority	Lead	Key Dates/Milestones		Impact & Evaluation		RAG
Workforce	E – Workforce and Talent Development	How effectively is AI being integrated into the workload reduction strategy to streamline tasks, enhance teaching, and support staff well-being, fostering professional growth and organizational resilience?	To embed AI more deeply and strategically into everyday practices across the Trust, focusing on sustainable workload reduction, enhanced teaching strategies, and greater staff confidence in using AI tools. This year’s focus will shift from early adoption to system-wide consolidation, impact evaluation, and the creation of scalable, ethical models of AI integration that promote professional growth and organisational efficiency.	Autumn Review the impact of last year’s initiatives—such as AIR and LEXPLORE—using both qualitative and quantitative feedback. Identify scalable AI tools that have shown clear evidence of workload reduction or teaching enhancement and create a shortlist for Trust-wide expansion. Begin developing a CPD framework for upskilling staff in AI fluency and ethical use.	1. Developing & Delivering High Quality Education & 4. Empowering Digital Transformation	Various	Sep-25	Dec-25			
				Spring Roll out the selected AI tools across additional phases or subject areas, with a focus on feedback-informed adaptation. Use pilot data to refine AI-supported workflows, particularly in assessment, feedback, planning and administrative tasks. Ensure well-being remains a central lens when evaluating impact.	1. Developing & Delivering High Quality Education & 4. Empowering Digital Transformation	Various	Jan-26	Apr-26			
				Summer Conduct a formal Trust-wide evaluation of AI integration, capturing both impact data and lived experience from staff and pupils. Finalise a set of Trust-wide AI Guidelines outlining ethical standards, use cases, and support pathways. Begin developing a shared AI Toolkit with schools..	1. Developing & Delivering High Quality Education & 4. Empowering Digital Transformation	Various	May-26	Jul-26			
		Creating a Workforce Culture of Value, Voice, and Vision Deepen the Trust’s commitment to creating a professional culture where every colleague feels valued, heard, and supported.	To move from a foundation of support and engagement to a culture of empowerment and shared ownership. This includes enhancing staff well-being, promoting equity of experience across all roles and settings, expanding leadership development opportunities, and using data to inform sustainable improvements in workforce morale, capability, and retention.	Autumn Consolidate and scale existing well-being and feedback mechanisms. Conduct a structured analysis of last year’s staff survey results alongside HR data (e.g. absence, turnover, CPD access) to identify trends across schools, roles, and career stages. New or revised focus areas will be co-developed through cross-role staff working groups—e.g. support staff, early career teachers, and middle leaders.		Sally Goodall / Victoria Harrison / Tom Banham / Executive Leaders	Sep-25	Dec-25			
				Spring Expand our focus on professional development, growth, and career progression for all staff groups. A cross-phase leadership development offer will be launched to support aspiring middle and senior leaders, with access to coaching, structured networking opportunities, and engagement in action-research projects aligned to school improvement priorities. Also look to establish new professional networks for support staff, recognising their vital contribution to school culture and operational excellence. Dedicated communities of practice will be created for roles such as Attendance Leads, and a potential development pathway will be introduced for aspiring Office Managers seeking progression into School Business Manager roles, supported by mentoring, peer observation, and targeted CPD in areas such as finance, compliance, and leadership.		Sally Goodall / Victoria Harrison / Tom Banham / Executive Leaders	Jan-26	Apr-26			
				Summer Reflect, evaluate, and plan forward. A Trust-wide staff survey will be conducted and the results will inform updated priorities for 2026 and support school leaders in adapting their local workforce strategies.	2. Growth and Collaboration	Sally Goodall / Victoria Harrison / Tom Banham / Executive Leaders	May-26	Jul-26			
		To what extent is the workforce supported and held accountable in alignment with HCAT HR policies?	To ensure that all HR processes—particularly those related to performance, compliance, and staff support—are consistently and effectively applied across the Trust.	Ongoing Over the year, work will be undertaken to map existing HR workflows to ARBOR’s evolving functionality — including areas such as absence monitoring, training compliance, professional development tracking, and performance management documentation. Standardisation will be a key priority. Schools will be supported in applying consistent practices for appraisals, capability procedures, policy communication, and workload monitoring, all in line with the Trust’s core HR framework. Policy reviews will continue throughout the year to ensure alignment with national guidance, legal compliance, and evolving Trust needs. Particular attention will be given to ensuring policies are practical, equitable, and accessible to all staff, with systems in place to monitor uptake and understanding.	2. Growth and Collaboration	DCEO DofHR	Sep-25	Jul-26			