

New Academy Induction Policy

Welcome to the Horncastle Education Trust. The Trust came into being in December 2018 with four founding schools who were all genuinely committed to partnership working in order to provide the best possible experience and opportunities for our community.

As our Trust grows, it is important that we do so in a way which enriches our family of schools and does not jeopardise future sustainability.

The underlying principle of our Trust is that all schools are in equal partnership irrespective of their size, phase of education, length of membership or Ofsted category. It is therefore our intention that governance should be as close as possible to the point of impact so that as many decisions as possible are made at a local level to fully meet the needs of students and their local communities with the support and strength of the Trust behind them.

Our aim is to create an inclusive and supportive learning environment to enable all learners to fulfil their potential.

We believe that every student whatever their background has the right to flourish, to achieve and to succeed and everything undertaken by Horncastle Education Trust should have this ambition at its heart.

We welcome expressions of interest from schools in our locality who share our passion, commitment and ethos.

Contact Us: enquiries@horncastleeducationtrust.org

1. Due Diligence

Upon receiving an expression of interest to join our Trust, the CEO will lead discussions to explore the potential for extending our family of schools. Supported by Trustees and the CFO, the CEO will undertake professional scrutiny through due diligence. We also recommend that a school wishing to join us undertakes a similar due diligence exercise on our Trust.

Due diligence comprises an investigation of and research into the background and financial condition, business operations and contractual obligations of a school. It is done to establish a complete, accurate and reliable picture of the organisation so that realistic, fact-based decisions can be made. Due diligence enhances the quality of information available to decision makers.

Due diligence covers the following areas:

- Attainment and Educational Performance
- Admissions and Pupil Projections
- Curriculum and Teaching & Learning
- Finance and Sustainability
- Organisational Factors including Personnel
- Leadership and Governance Capacity
- Asset Condition
- Health & Safety
- Legal, Regulatory and Compliance
- Risk Awareness

A formal report will be compiled and provided to the Trust Board and the Governing Body of the school wishing to join our MAT, sharing the outcomes and recommendation.

Upon a successful recommendation for joining the Trust, parties will collaborate and develop an action plan encompassing transfer or conversion as appropriate. It is the expectation that any school joining our Trust will utilise the existing expertise and consultancy provided by the Trust's solicitors and accountants. The CEO and CFO will be involved to support the school during this period and communicate progress back to the Board.

2. Induction & Support

Managing change can be exciting, however, we also recognise that this can bring anxiety and challenge, particularly where conversion to an academy brings additional compliance requirements. Our Trust leadership and central services teams will support new schools through mentoring and coaching, providing a direct contact where appropriate for key members of staff and core functions.

It is anticipated through the provision of high quality guidance and support at the start of a school's journey with our Trust, this will prepare them well for their future within our MAT. Our Trust is committed to putting this level of support in place for all schools that join us.

3. Trust Structure & Governance

Our Trust comprises **Members**, who are viewed as guardians of the constitution; **Trustees**, who are responsible for the strategic direction and oversight of Trust operations; **Local Governing Bodies**, who continue to sustain their school's individuality and character, supporting their school and its leadership team; and the **Executive Leadership Team** which comprises the CEO, CFO and Headteachers of each school.

All governance within the Horncastle Education Trust flows from the Trust Board who have legal responsibility for the operation of the Trust. The law places accountability for the educational outcomes and financial diligence of the Trust firmly with the Trustees and the CEO as Accounting Officer. However, a fundamental principle for the Horncastle Education Trust is that effective governance is best delivered as close as possible to the point of impact of decisions. We have a governance structure that delegates significant accountability to our Local Governing Bodies.

Our operating framework is set out in detail with the Scheme of Delegation.

4. Central Services

We operate a central services model to which schools contribute through a 5% membership fee of their general annual grant. Our family of schools benefit from the following services:

- Professional leadership from the CEO and CFO
- A Central Finance Team for all finance functions
- HR and Personnel Services
- Payroll Services
- Insurance Cover
- Audit and Internal Assurance
- Health & Safety Inspection and Support
- Data Protection Officer Services
- Digital Development/ICT Leadership and Support
- Professional CPD via the Charter Teaching School
- Governance Reviews
- Safeguarding Reviews
- Pupil Premium Reviews
- Annual Governance Conference
- Membership of National Bodies such as the NGA and CST

We are a relatively young MAT and as we grow in strength and experience, our services will continue to evolve.

5. Key Performance Indicators

Performance is measured through proactive monitoring and evaluation, which provides comprehensive, up-to-date and accurate information. We aim to be efficient, effective and transparent in our approach and enable the data collected to be understood by our range of stakeholders. We will evaluate key areas of performance, including achievement, behaviour, leadership and quality of learning, health & safety, finance and workforce data. This will lead to actions that bring about improved outcomes and opportunities for students and facilitate the sharing of best practice across the Trust.

Our Monitoring and Evaluation Policy provides more detail and a copy of the data dashboard can be viewed.

6. School Improvement

Our vision is based on the fundamental principle that all children in every school deserve to experience success which can only be achieved when all available resources are channelled to serve that single purpose.

This School Improvement Strategy has been designed to complement and support both the Trust's Monitoring and Evaluation Policy and the actions the Trust takes when a school's performance gives cause for concern. The Trust's approach to school improvement is underpinned by robust monitoring and evaluation systems and is integrated and integral to the following:

- The vision, values and ethos of Horncastle Education Trust.
- The premise that all schools have good elements and that even the most successful schools can improve.
- The Trust's governance and accountability structures.
- Meeting all external accountability and compliance requirements.

The Trust's school improvement model has four strands;

Commitment; Uncompromising commitment to our common purpose of creating a better future for our children. Our school improvement model is based on having a thorough knowledge and understanding of each Trust school within a context of high expectations that are founded in secure and robust monitoring and evaluation.

Capacity; We see the value in building capacity so that each school has access to a self-sustaining reservoir of system leaders. Utilising the expertise within our Teaching School means that each school can strategically deploy existing expertise, succession plan through needs-led CPD and access a suite of programmes so that leadership at every level (including governance and support services) is a renewable resource.

Capability; Adopting a solution-focussed remit for school improvement gives our Trust the ability to understand why progress is being made, or why it is not. This is something our Trust believes is vital to its school improvement work. The data dashboard for each Trust school is the constant; it is the regular health check of routine performance measures across the Trust and is utilised to assess if schools are sustainable and have the capability to support others or are in need of support.

Commissioning; Through intelligent networking and collaboration, we identify the expertise needed by interrogating and deploying from the Trust's own resource base enhanced by access to the wider network of contacts through our Teaching School. The Trust recognises that effective school improvement is predicated upon its ability to deploy expertise strategically.

View our School Improvement Strategy for full details.

The Trust Board remains ultimately responsible for all school within our Trust, in the event that a school gives cause for concern, the Trust may be compelled to intervene and review, and then withdraw, delegated authority for some or for all elements of governance. In such circumstances the Trust Board will work closely with the school giving cause for concern and with those involved in its governance. The Trust Board uses risk assessment based upon analysis of available academy performance data to ensure that its approach to intervention is both timely and appropriate, and school improvement resources can be focussed to have greatest impact. The Trust Board is committed to providing ongoing support for its schools.

Further information about support for schools giving cause for concern can be found within our Scheme of Delegation.

7. Key Documents

We utilise our internal documents for governance and strategy, alongside those published by the Department for Education.

- Articles of Association
- Master Funding Agreement
- Scheme of Delegation
- School Improvement Strategy
- Monitoring and Evaluation Policy
- Finance Policy
- Governance Handbook
- Academies Financial Handbook
- Annual Accounts Direction
- The Nolan Principles

Further Trust policies can be viewed on our website: www.horncastleeducationtrust.org