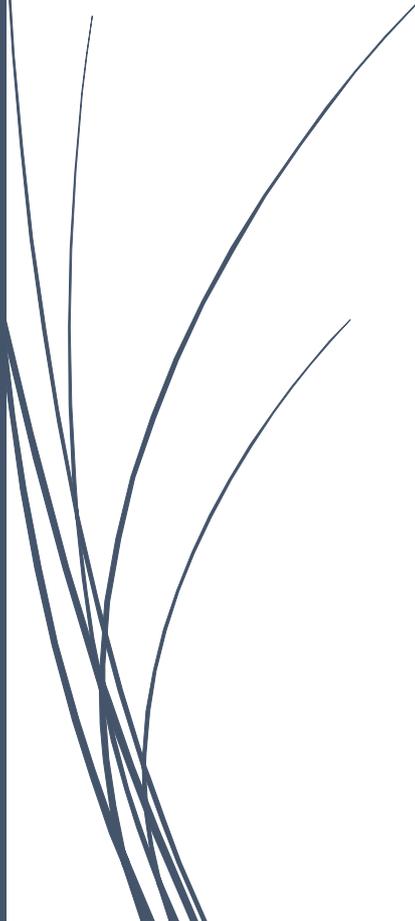


April 2019



School Improvement Strategy

*(to be read with the Trust's Monitoring & Evaluation
Policy and Section 3 of the Scheme of Delegation).*



The School Improvement Strategy for Horncastle Education Trust

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. At Horncastle Education Trust *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 have an important role in making sure that every child in our locality can have the lifelong benefits that attending a good school brings. The geographic location of the Trust, central to Lincolnshire between the Wolds to its North, the Fens to its South and the North Sea coast to its east means that it can respond to the challenges our locality poses. The recent designation of Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School as a Teaching School, Charter TSA, sits at the heart of our school improvement model. As part of the Trust's monitoring and evaluation policy, Trust Schools are risk assessed three times per year to identify their school improvement capacity in terms of their ability to improve their own and other schools. This informs the strategic planning around the Trust's commitment to, capacity for, capability in and commissioning of school improvement.

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 Trust School's performance gives cause for concern (pages 4-6 in the Trust's Scheme of Delegation). 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 4 strands:

- ***Commitment***

- **Capacity**
- **Capability**
- **Commissioning**

Commitment

Uncompromising **Commitment** to our common purpose of creating a better future for our children. Horncastle Education Trust 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.

The Trust uses a CORE DATA SET (Trustee Data Dashboard) alongside external sources of data such as ASP, Ofsted, external reviews to monitor progress and performance that comprise summative and formative information. The CORE DATA SET (Trustee Data Dashboard) provides a graphic overview of a Trust School's performance. Key metrics are monitored alongside progress and outcome assessment data for each Trust School. Key metrics include:

- Attendance (student and staff)
- Exclusions (internal and external)
- SEND
- Disadvantaged & LAC students
- Safeguarding & referrals (including e-safety)
- Admissions (including mid-year)
- Recruitment (appointments / leavers / deployment /use of temporary staff)
- Financial management
- Quality of teaching

Capacity

Horncastle Education Trust sees value in building **Capacity** so that it has access to a self -sustaining reservoir of system leaders. This means it can:

- Strategically deploy existing expertise
- Succession plan through a needs-led CPD programme that has coaching and mentoring and inquiry-based research at its heart

- Offer a suite of programmes so that leadership at every level (including governance and support services) is a renewable resource

The process begins with an audit of expertise to facilitate the Trust's ability to deploy expertise strategically across all Trust Schools and is directly linked and mapped to the TSA. The termly school improvement risk assessment will provide an indication of the ability each Trust School has to effect school improvement within and beyond its own locality.

Termly School Improvement Risk Assessment (S2SS Capacity)

Following the CEO termly Trust School visits, the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) will review the capacity of each Trust School for providing support based on the Core Data Set and other sources of evidence. *This information will be shared with Charter TSA.* The Trust School will be allocated to a category of S2SS capacity:

A: System contributor – at least Good in all areas. Sufficient capacity to improve own and other schools

B: Self-sustaining – at least Good in all areas. Sufficient capacity to improve own school. Limited capacity to improve others.

C: Approaching Self-sufficiency - school is Good although not securely so in all areas. Sufficient capacity to improve own school with support.

D: System utiliser– school has some significant weakness. Focussed support needed to create capacity to improve.

School Improvement at Horncastle Education Trust is based on having capacity through the Charter TSA to mobilise the necessary support once a weakness is pinpointed; dealing with emerging issues in a timely fashion is vital to enabling effective improvement to take place. The Scheme of Delegation (Section 3) sets out clearly the triggers and actions to be taken should a Trust School's performance give cause for concern.

The Trust values the role that Middle Leaders play in an effective school improvement strategy and will work with the Charter TSA to appoint and deploy SLEs, LLEs and LLGs within and across the Trust.

Capability

Having **Capability** by adopting a solution-focussed remit for school improvement; the ability to understand why progress is being made or why it is not is something Horncastle Education Trust believes is vital to its school improvement work.

The **CORE DATA SET** for each Trust School is the constant, the regular health check on routine performance measures across the Trust; providing a comparative tool that Trustees, through intelligent questioning, can hold the CEO to account.

The Trust places peer review central to its work both internally across all of its Trust Schools and externally through the Charter TSA, external partners and external reviewers to moderate and benchmark the Trust's performance such as annual Pupil Premium reviews and Reviews of Governance.

In addition to external scrutiny delivered by Ofsted and HMI, the Trust draws upon the expertise of NLEs and consultants to enhance external challenge such as undertaking Trust-wide reviews of areas like spending, governance, pupil premium, SEND provision etc.

Standardisation and benchmarking is the norm across the Trust at different levels - individual subjects, faculties, Key Stages, cohorts, local governing bodies etc.

Trust Schools write their own SEF which is reviewed with the CEO on a termly basis leading to an annual review with Trustees.

Across the Trust, joint learning walks, working parties, joint research projects, common approaches to lesson observations and appraisal and the like ensure that the constituent parts of the Trust work well together whilst holding the different elements to account.

The identification of an emerging issue or area of concern will trigger an intervention which begins with an initial audit and risk assessment and follows the levels of intervention outlined in the Scheme of Delegation (Section 3 – When an academy's performance gives cause for concern).

The Trust recognises that there needs to be balance between school improvement activity which is hierarchical in nature such as the requirements of the CORE DATA SET and actions that are going to promote networking such as inquiry-based research, peer reviews, coaching and learning walks. It is imperative to get the balance right to

avoid a culture of compliance which inhibits a sense of ownership and stifles creativity or a laissez-faire culture where a proliferation of systems and activity delivers little or no impact.

Commissioning

Agile **Commissioning** through intelligent networking and collaboration identifies the expertise needed by interrogating and deploying from the Trust's own resource base enhanced by access to the wider network of contacts through the Charter TSA. The Trust recognises that effective school improvement is predicated upon its ability to deploy expertise strategically.

The Trust uses its strong links with the Local Authority, the Lincolnshire Teaching Schools Together, the Lincolnshire Learning Partnership, the Diocese of Lincoln, the Lincolnshire Grammar Schools Association and both Lincoln University and BGU to supplement and to source the expertise it needs.

Summary

Although Horncastle Education Trust believes that effective school improvement is borne out of being **respectful** of the character of its individual academies (nationally there are more parts of schools that are good than there are good schools), it is clear that identifying the strengths of each school and ensuring that they are well-understood and shared is as important as knowing the areas where improvement and thus intervention is needed. A robust system of monitoring and evaluation ensures that the Trust remains vigilant to changes in a Trust School's performance and is able through swift intervention to secure improvement. The Trust uses a three stage intervention model to secure improvement when a Trust School's performance gives cause for concern. The triggers for intervention and the stages involved are set out in the Scheme of Delegation (Section 3).

The Trust is committed to being **strategically resourceful**; having the capacity within its own schools supplemented by externally derived expertise to identify and deliver its school improvement needs.

The CORE DATA SET plus the other quality assurance checks such as peer reviews, external audits and the termly review of school improvement capacity make the Trust

responsive and **agile** especially when a Trust School's performance gives cause for concern.

Horncastle Education Trust is committed to its locality and will be **relentless** in securing better outcomes for the children within the communities it serves.

The Trust believes that the most effective school improvement comes from a constant state of **restlessness** and a desire to seek improvement even in the most successful schools.

The challenges within the East Lindsey locality as well as those posed regionally and nationally by funding and shifting education policy will require the Horncastle Education Trust to be agile in its operation, constantly mindful of its founding principles and in doing so be **resilient**.

To be effective the trustees of the Horncastle Education Trust need to ensure that the following key attributes pervade all of their work:

- They have an understanding of the specific challenges that each Trust School faces and know what needs to be done to secure improvement.
- Seek to understand how success happens and ensure that good practice is replicated across the Trust.
- They are fully informed on what school improvement capacity the Trust has and know where further support could be drawn from if required.
- They maintain a strong strategic capacity to hold leaders to account for delivering school improvement.

Finally, the Trust recognises that a School Improvement Strategy in conjunction with the Monitoring and Evaluation Policy and the powers it has to intervene when a Trust School's performance gives cause for concern, are most effective when based on and swiftly followed by the deployment of the necessary expertise. In its most simple terms the Trust's approach to school improvement is:

Audit, Plan, Do, Review and begin again.