



**GREAT  
HEIGHTS**

ACADEMY TRUST

*Achieving excellence together*

# **Business Plan**

## **2024-2025**



***“Our strong Trust board is committed to the vision and values of the Trust and each Trustee has high aspirations for all our pupils”***

## Welcome

*From the Chair of Trust Board*

**The Great Heights Academy Trust focuses on meaningful collaboration between Trust schools and designations for the benefit of all the pupils in every Trust school. As Chair of the Trust Board, I am pleased to introduce you to our Business Plan for 2024-25.**

This business plan sets out very clearly our determination to support and challenge our schools to provide the best possible educational experience for all the pupils by having a creative and ambitious curriculum and the highest quality teaching. There is a relentless focus on academic excellence and high-quality pastoral care to ensure that our children are capable, confident and caring learners.

The wealth of expertise within our schools, along with high quality governance, fosters a strong sense of belonging and community across the Trust whilst remaining focused on each child achieving their full potential. We strive to develop a culture where each member of staff is motivated and supported to provide high quality, innovative teaching along with opportunities for sharing their expertise.

Our strong Trust Board is committed to the vision and values of the Trust and each Trustee has high aspirations for all our children.

This plan charts our journey to excellence for all and I commend it to you.

**Carlton Midgley**  
Chair of Trust Board





*“Proud to have been recognised by Prince Charles, the now King Charles III for services to Education and recognition of our MAT collaborations to date.”*



## Welcome

*From the Chief Executive Officer*

**It is my privilege and pleasure as CEO to present our business plan for 2024-2025 as it sets the high expectations which all our stakeholders have to ensure all those in our care can be supported on their improvement journey.**

Following our designation as a sponsor over ten years ago, we have grown in our capacity to support and challenge each other in order that our pupils and families have equality of provision. We are a growing MAT with an impressive network of partnerships and in-house designations which share our vision and values. Our strong multi-designated offers from our SCITT, Research School and English Hub are uniquely positioned within our MAT and so, provide readily accessible expertise and capacity which is the major core school improvement business offer.

As the educational landscape continues to change at pace with financial pressures and recruitment challenges, the Trust is securely positioned to offer a collaborative environment for schools to access support and challenge for school improvement and access to future teachers.

Strong local and national partnerships alongside engagement in initiatives and developments with the DfE and the EEF offer our schools the added benefit of bespoke offers. These can accurately and effectively target needs and developments in order that all in our care can access lifelong learning opportunities and aspire to reach their true potential.

This business plan details examples of our track record and our 'road map' offers accessible to all schools seeking bespoke school improvement support within our Trust and those interested in joining us. This document signals to all our collaborative working ethos and a pledge to those whom we engage with.

**Amanda Bennett OBE**  
CEO

*Achieving excellence together*

# Great Heights Voices

## *Students and parents*

"My child has exceeded expectations socially, emotionally and educationally at Marsden. I couldn't be more happy with everything." - **Parent, Marsden Junior School**

"My child has grown in confidence and happiness this year, and as a family we are extremely grateful for that." - **Parent, Bowling Green Academy**

"I feel that as I have entered The MFG, I have found my confidence. I feel comfortable and safe as a student here." - **Year 7 student, The Mirfield Free Grammar**

"What a wonderful school – teaching, progress updates, general communication are all excellent. Our child's current teacher is exceptional, we have a happy, nurtured and well educated son. Thank you to everyone at Greetland Academy that makes it the team that it is." - **Parent, The Greetland Academy**

"In our home, teachers are thought of very highly, and very fondly by our child." - **Parent, Marsden Junior School**







# All about us

*Building a stronger, broader 2-18 trust offer in West Yorkshire*

Our Trust is a thriving and ambitious family of schools, dedicated to ensuring that every child, from early years through to sixth form, has the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

Over the past two years, we have tripled in size, now educating approximately 4,500 students and employing over 700 staff across our nine schools in West Yorkshire. This growth has strengthened our capacity to support and challenge one another, fostering a culture of collaboration, high expectations, and continuous improvement.

We recognise that strong schools are built on strong relationships with families and the wider community. We are deeply committed to working in partnership with parents, carers, and local organisations to ensure that our schools

are not just places of learning, but vibrant focal points at the heart of the communities we serve. Through regular engagement, open communication, and a shared vision for success, we strive to create welcoming and inclusive schools that families can trust and take pride in.

Whether through community events, family support initiatives, or collaboration with local services, we are dedicated to making every Great Heights school a place where children thrive, families feel valued, and the wider community benefits from the opportunities our schools provide.

# Culture

## Vision and values

At Great Heights Academy Trust, our strength lies in our culture of collaboration, mutual respect, and shared ambition. We believe that the best outcomes for children are achieved when every member of our trust - leaders, teachers, staff, and students - sees themselves as both givers and receivers of support. This culture of collective responsibility ensures that all schools within our trust benefit from a network of expertise, encouragement, and challenge.

We champion a balance of autonomy and accountability, where each school retains its unique identity while contributing to the wider success of our trust. By fostering strong partnerships, valuing professional development, and upholding the highest standards in education, we create an environment where everyone can aspire, achieve, and reach GREAT heights.

This commitment to collaboration and continuous improvement is reflected in our vision and values.

Our Trust vision has school improvement at its heart that will benefit all children in Trust schools and live by our strapline of: **Achieving Excellence Together.**

We aim to:

- ★ Develop an effective partnership of schools that share a commitment to raising standards

- ★ Strengthen the partnership by valuing the uniqueness of each school and expecting all schools to contribute
- ★ Foster relationships based on mutual respect with a balance of autonomy and accountability
- ★ Share expertise – both best practice and best practitioners
- ★ Develop all teachers and leaders through effective professional development.

This Trust vision drives both our School Improvement Strategy and our Strategy for Growth. Our mantra across our partnerships embraces the themes:

**Great teaching and learning opportunities for all in the partnership**

**Real life opportunities to develop an understanding of the wider world**

**Enthuse a love of learning and mutual respect**

**Academic development to nurture potential for all**

**Thorough accountability**

## Our vision and values statement

The Great Heights Academy Trust strives to always provide an inspirational, positive and welcoming environment where there is a sense of pride and fun and where everyone works together with confidence, enthusiasm and mutual respect.

We aim to nurture academic, personal, spiritual and social development in a caring and professional manner so that all achieve their full potential and all can reach **GREAT** heights.



# Culture

## *A sense of belonging - The Trust, Our Trust, My Trust*

### Principal of Nields Academy, Diane Mahon shares her experience of joining our Trust as a senior leader.

I joined Great Heights Academy Trust on May 1st 2024. From my very first encounter with the central team at Riverside Mill I was made to feel extremely welcome. During the summer term I was lucky enough to be able to spend some time in all of the schools within the Trust family – a really good induction in to the ways of the Trust. The values of the Trust shone out from every school as well as the Nolan Principles of Public Life being brought to life rather than just being a paper exercise. Each school has retained its own individual character and uniqueness whilst successfully living and breathing, what I now understand is, our Trust vision.

On the 1st September 2024 I was lucky enough to become the Principal of Nields Academy. The school itself has had a turbulent history in terms of leadership for several years and in November 2023 received an inadequate judgement from Ofsted. Myself and my staff are aware that many challenges lie ahead and the future is going to be a bumpy road to walk along but it has been clear

from day one with our Trust we would not be walking that road alone. A school in the position Nields finds itself in presents a daunting task for anyone to take on. It would be easy to feel isolated, vulnerable and a bit lost in these circumstances however the support I have received and continue to receive both professionally and personally from our Trust is second to none.

Having previously been a Head Teacher in a local authority, the level and depth of expertise and rapid support available from Great Heights has been everything I was told it would be and more. Finance, HR, Governance, IT Support and Health and Safety are all carefully watched over by the central team which allows me to focus on the very important aspects of school improvement and securing better outcomes for our children. Jess Mellor (Head of the Research School) has created a Nields Teaching Model and is delivering high quality training for staff – this started on the first training day in September.



With Jimmy Sayles (Executive Principal - Performance and Outcomes) walking alongside me and never more than a phone-call away I know we will not fail in realising our ambitious vision (something all my staff are now united in) that all children are prepared for the next phase of their education so 'Achieving Excellence Together'.

As we begin our transformational voyage at Nields I feel extremely proud and privileged to be the Principal of Nields Academy and to be part of such an exceptional organization; an organization to which I strongly feel I really belong. I have made the journey from describing Great Heights as 'The' Trust to feeling at Nields it is 'Our' Trust to really believing it is 'My' Trust.





# Achievement

*We provide the support needed for schools to thrive*

Great Heights Academy Trust began its journey as The Greetland Academy, a highly successful primary school in Calderdale. Recognised for its strong leadership, outstanding teaching, and consistently high pupil outcomes, Greetland became a beacon of excellence within the region. With a deep commitment to collaboration, school improvement, and sharing best practice, the school took its first steps towards supporting others by sponsoring schools in need of improvement. Building on this success, the trust evolved from a single academy trust, to the nine-school trust we are today, serving thousands of students across three local authorities.

Our journey has been marked by significant achievements, including improved attendance across our schools, with persistent absenteeism reducing in all settings, and Ofsted inspections highlighting the strength of our support and governance.

**We provide the support needed for schools to thrive. Here's how:**

- The Great Heights Research School, West Yorkshire is one of just 32 national

Research Schools chosen by the EEF and DfE to connect teachers and schools to evidence informed practice. Linking professional development opportunities, blogs and articles, we provide updates and access to the latest EEF guidance reports, alongside in-house access to what works in regard to individual or locality hub group needs.

- Our in-house School Improvement Team also helps support school development planning, peer reviews, and SIP visits through expertise and experience readily accessible from our Research School - including Evidence Leads in Education (ELEs).
- In addition, expertise from our system leaders, Research School and English Hub not only help support schools in shaping their bespoke knowledge-rich curriculums, but also provide access to existing proven curriculum offers too.

# Achievement

*We provide the support needed for schools to thrive*

## Expertise

From headship to aspirational leaders' programmes, we strive to provide an inspirational, positive and welcoming environment to help you achieve your full potential, with Trust expertise, resources and support readily available through our in-house teams.

## Impact Range

From nurseries to post-16 colleges, infant, primary and middle schools to secondary education, we have supported schools across Yorkshire and beyond through our CPD provision. To date, we have supported:

- ✓ Locality needs including the Oldham Opportunity Area plan, with offers now extending to Tameside and Kirklees
- ✓ System leadership in excess of 30 schools, with many improving from RI (Requires Improvement) to Good - earning us a thank you from Baroness Berridge
- ✓ Specialist teacher professional learning, delivering School Improvement in priority areas and the design of national training for 'Metacognition' via our Research School
- ✓ The design of a SSIF project in English (rounds 1 and 3), providing JPD sessions for teachers and

leaders and a subsequent KS1-2 Progress score of more than 7 points across the lifetime of the project

- ✓ Effective use of Teaching Assistants, including the pilot study and the EEF project delivery across Calderdale
- ✓ The ESFA Financial Steering Group and our CEO provide system leadership input
- ✓ More than a dozen schools in their transfer to Academy status, with direct advice and due diligence support through our SLE in Academy Conversion and Academy Administration
- ✓ NLE EEF training for the 18/19 School Improvement Offer, designing, presenting and delivering implementation advice at events throughout the country.

## Happy successful pupils

Happy successful children are at the heart of everything we do, which is why we ensure an in-depth knowledge of the needs and challenges faced by each of the schools we work with.

We enable appropriate support and/or intervention to be planned and implemented effectively, providing a timetable of access to systematic and rigorous monitoring and evaluation

on all key issues, including:

- ✓ Effectiveness of leadership and management
- ✓ Quality of teaching and learning
- ✓ Performance and progress of different groups of pupils
- ✓ Accuracy of assessment and predictions
- ✓ Ambitiousness and appropriateness of the curriculum
- ✓ Standards of behaviour
- ✓ Personal development
- ✓ Children's mental health and well-being is addressed effectively – making Trust schools a place where children want to be
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# Achievement

## *Current priorities and aspirations*

### Priorities for 2024-25

1. To promote GHAT academy school collaborations, networking and alignment of financial positioning and associated partnership working in order to improve outcomes for all pupils.
2. To further develop organisational accountability measures; People Strategy development; Improved digital infrastructure offers and feedback from stakeholders; development of reporting systems of governance against trust description expectations.
3. To reset and promote GHAT cultural behaviour expectations, identifying audience promotions and to seek further stakeholder engagement promotions.
4. To deliver a 2-18 'performance and outcomes strategy' with specific support for our most vulnerable schools.
5. To design and activate a GHAT communication strategy during 24-25.

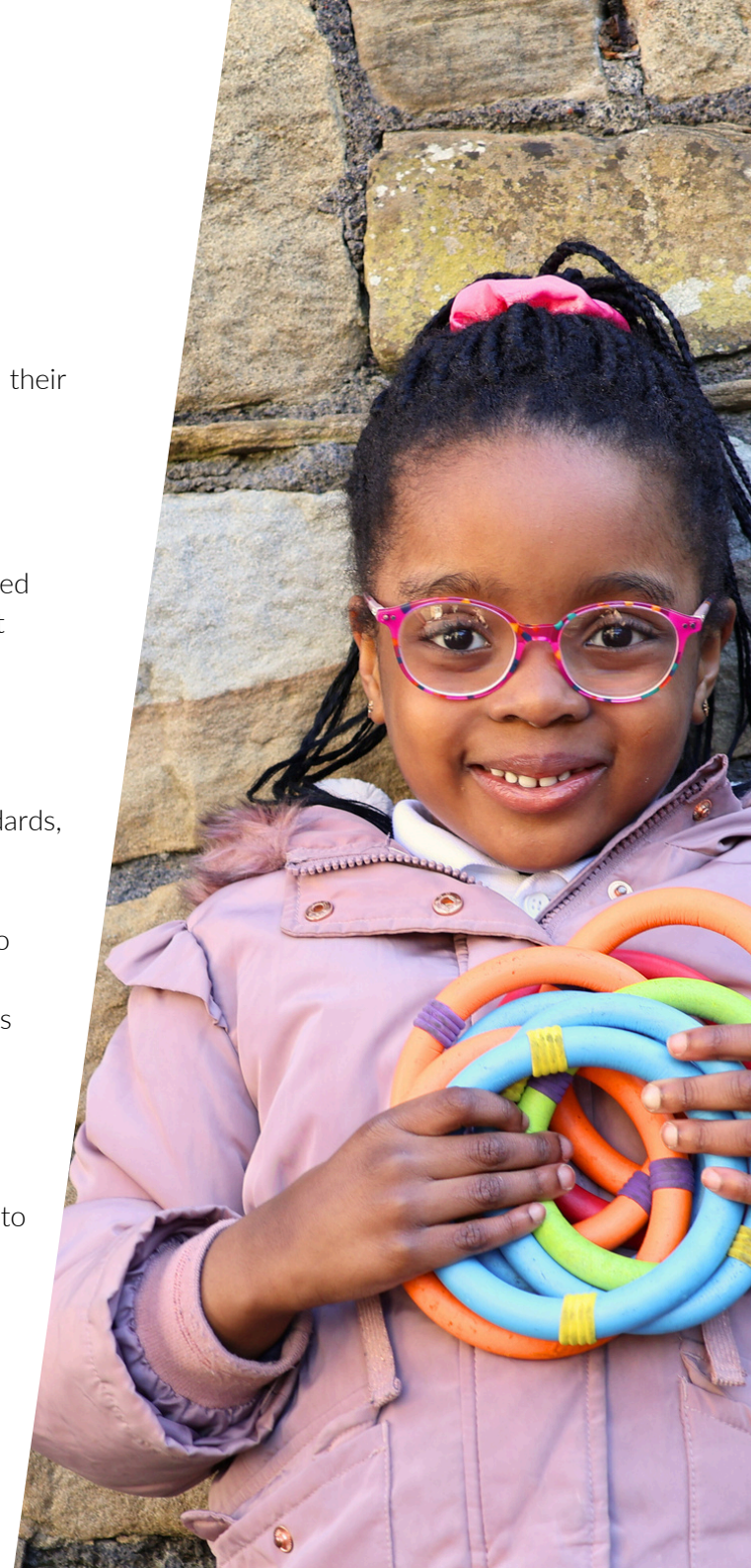
### Key Performance Indicators

Effective benchmarking of pupil performance and implementation of research informed strategies to enable:

- All pupils, including the most vulnerable and

disadvantaged make at least good progress from their different starting points

- Gaps in learning loss are identified and effective measures deployed
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics improve annually or high standards are maintained
- Groups at risk of underachieving make sufficient progress to 'narrow the gap' of any lost learning
- Absence and exclusions are below the national average, persistent absenteeism is proactively mitigated
- All teachers meet or exceed the Teachers' Standards, as do Principals linked to their Headteacher Standards
- Each academy has an in-year surplus or a plan to eliminate the in-year deficit quickly
- All schools use emergency planning and business continuity processes effectively during emergency situations
- All school buildings are in a good state of repair with asset management plans, buildings maintenance plans and annual safety checks up to date to address needs over time
- All levels of governance perform effectively and all school leaders are held to account.





# Excellence

*We highlight our Talent Management Strategy and key reasons to join our MAT*

## 1. Develop great teachers

We are an approved provider of UCL's Early Career Framework (ECF) - a two-year government funded programme designed to support newly qualified teachers and their mentors.

We believe that equipping the next generation of great teachers can only be possible through equal and close collaboration between schools, colleges and universities. That's why, in partnership with the University of Huddersfield, our training programme, AA Teamworks SCITT, offers trainees the opportunity to learn through an established Initial Teacher Education (ITE) Partnership - ensuring the best possible support and education.

## 2. Staff retention

We recognise that effective teacher support is a key factor in improving practice, learning and staff retention.

Supporting career pathways at all levels, we provide training and support to senior, middle and future leaders through bespoke coaching and mentoring, network groups for curriculum leaders, key provision focus areas and management teams, and access

to research informed professional development - including the EEF's Making Best use of Teaching Assistants.

## 3. Collaboration

We empower subject leaders to plan together and exchange schemes of work and best practice, providing staff access to support networks and offers that enable shared lesson planning, sharing and moderating approaches to assessment, coaching to improve practice, and inquiry-based research.

Networking with others across the trust to share and support developments, we proactively raise awareness of professional standards plus misunderstandings and misconceptions on roles and responsibilities. Our audits and peer reviews help identify strengths and areas for development to better shape curriculum offers as well as providing increased power to negotiate services and gain better value.

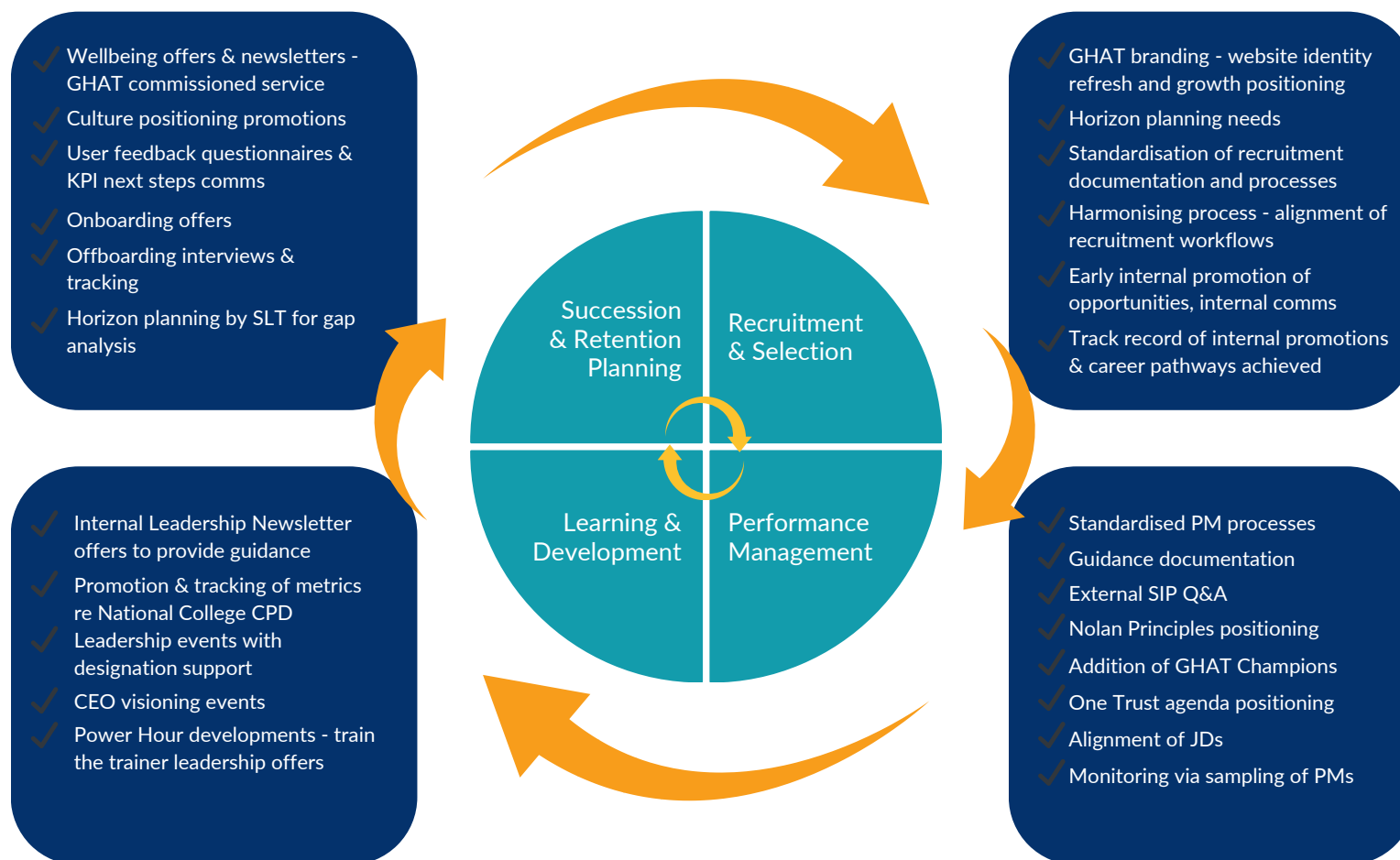
From phonics and Seesaw platform learning, to SEND and assessment, we provide network group access to curriculum leaders and bespoke forums.



# Excellence

## Talent Management Lifecycle

The Great Heights Academy Trust Talent Management Strategy (TMS) seeks to embody our Trust aims and objectives to support the continuing improvement of pupils, staff colleagues and governors, including all leaders and managers across our One Trust teams, so all can 'reach great heights.' This TMS is positioned to achieve Great Heights vision, values and aims.



# Great Heights Voices

## *Talent Management in Action*



“As the Executive Principal at Raynville Academy and Director of Governance for the Great Heights Academy Trust, I support schools in governance, behaviour, attendance, and complaints. My role involves enhancing leadership capacity, providing professional development opportunities, and supporting leaders and governors. I have also been successfully deployed in schools new to our Trust to bolster leadership capacity during the onboarding phases.

I am dedicated to maintaining each school's unique identity while implementing Trust-wide systems for rapid and sustained improvement. The Trust's motto, 'Achieving Excellence Together', epitomises the collaborative and supportive culture we foster, allowing everyone to flourish.”

**Andrew Midgley** - Director of Governance & Executive Principal at Raynville Academy

“As a new Principal, the support I received from GHAT was truly exceptional, making my transition from Deputy to Head seamless. Since then, the opportunities for ongoing professional growth have been incredible - whether through working with our designations, supporting other trust schools, contributing to our School Improvement team, or extending our impact beyond the trust through TSIO initiatives. GHAT's commitment to continuous development and its unique culture of collaboration make it an inspiring place to work. None of this would be possible without the expertise and dedication of our highly skilled central team.”

**Helen Crowther** - Executive Principal of The Greetland Academy & West Vale Academy with Responsibility for the GHAT Designations

“Joining Great Heights Academy Trust as an Executive Principal for Performance and Outcomes has been an incredibly rewarding and enriching experience over the past year. From the outset, I was fortunate to visit each of the schools within our Trust family, gaining a deep understanding of our shared vision while witnessing the Trust's values in action.

Over the past year, I have had the privilege of supporting and working directly with school leaders across the Trust in driving performance and improving outcomes. One of the most significant aspects of my role has been working alongside colleagues to navigate challenges and implement strategic improvements. I have witnessed firsthand the transformative power of collaborative leadership, as well as the unwavering commitment of our Trust to ensuring every school thrives.

Reflecting on my journey so far, I am immensely proud to be part of this exceptional organisation. The impact we are making across the Trust is both meaningful and far-reaching, improving the experiences and outcomes for children and staff alike. My time here has reinforced a deep sense of belonging, and I truly feel privileged to contribute to a community so dedicated to excellence, collaboration, and lasting positive change.”

**Jimmy Sayles** - Executive Principal for Performance & Outcomes

# Together

## School Improvement Strategy

### Core Offer

All Trust academies have access to a range of support, including:

- Professional development support for all
- Leadership and School Improvement dedicated teams, working collaboratively to improve outcomes
- Internal peer review monitoring support alongside external school improvement partner visits to provide external scrutiny
- Network groups for curriculum leaders
- Induction of ECF teachers
- Governor induction and development
- An effective Executive Leadership team and Trust Board to support and challenge the school
- Organisational effectiveness (HT standards domain) support meetings to ensure clear and sound financial, H&S, Premises and Safeguarding procedures which comply fully with the Academy Trust Handbook
- Dedicated School Business and HR links.

The level of support will respond to the level of powers and responsibilities delegated to each LGB.

### School Improvement Strategy

Our School Improvement Strategy is based on the importance of achieving effective leadership and management that will have a relentless focus on improving the quality and consistency of our curriculum offers. To respond and adapt and so enable children to be ready for the next stage of their educational journey.

### The strategy has five key strands:

#### 1 Good knowledge of the needs and challenges faced by each Trust school

Systematic and rigorous monitoring and evaluation of all major aspects to enable any issues to be found and appropriate support/intervention to be planned and implemented:

- Effectiveness of leadership and management, including safeguarding
- Quality of curriculum offers
- Standards of behaviour and attitudes
- Personal development
- Appropriateness of the curriculum
- Effective use of data to inform improvements which are securely evidence-informed

Monitoring methods adapt to changing needs with a calendar of offers and support including peer reviews, internal audits and questionnaires.

#### 2 Good knowledge of how to support each Trust school

We recognise that schools will need different types of support at different stages of their improvement journey. School self-evaluation will be moderated to ensure that priorities are accurately diagnosed and support is bespoke and appropriate. The Trust will then allocate personnel accordingly from the wide range of expert practitioners that we can access.

At the same time, we will be mindful of the need to get the right balance between maximising internal expertise and knowing when to draw on external help and challenge, both from individuals and schools outside the Trust.

We contract a Trust school improvement partner, with Ofsted inspection experience, to provide quality assurance for our work. In addition, we will continue to promote the use of evidence-based research, such as that provided by the Education Endowment Foundation, for whom we have led several projects in recent years.

#### 3 Effective development and deployment of leaders and expertise

The quality of school leaders is paramount in driving school improvement forward. We aim to identify the best leaders and practitioners, at all levels, and deploy that expertise across the Trust. We will continue to run development programmes for emerging, middle and senior leaders. Their strategic deployment will help to accelerate improvement across the Trust and we will build up a strong pool of talent for the future to ensure that the raised standards are sustained over time.

In addition, we will support the induction and training of effective governors and trustees.



#### 4 Investment in joint professional development of staff

A key factor in improving teaching, learning and pupil progress is effective support for teachers to improve their practice. In addition to our work with individual schools, we will organise joint inset and twilight sessions to address any gaps or weaknesses in subject knowledge or pedagogical practice. We will empower subject leaders to plan together, swap schemes of work and share good practice.

We will support classroom staff to work together in clusters through joint lesson planning, sharing and moderating approaches to assessment, coach improved practice and undertake inquiry-based research into aspects of learning.

#### 5 Monitoring progress and tracking impact

The progress of all Trust programmes will be monitored and their impact will be tracked - it is important to know the value that the Trust is adding. This requires the adoption of robust implementation plans with clear outcome indicators from each academy. We also enable a series of summary dashboards so senior leaders and governing boards can easily spot challenges and barriers. Internal and external reviews and peer MAT processes will ensure that these expectations are tracked and supported to enable all to build educational quality.

Our overall aim is that all Trust academies are able to rapidly move forward in their school improvement journey trajectory.

## Spotlight on a Great Heights Academy

*From joining to judgement, our journey*



**Jamie Stuttard,**  
Executive Principal  
Bowling Green Academy\*

I was thrilled to be able to share our Ofsted inspection report in June 2023.

Bowling Green Academy joined the Trust in December 2020, having been through two years of change and instability. I started four months later and, with the Trust's support, the progress made has been fast-paced and wide-reaching – felt by children, parents and staff alike.

At Bowling Green, we want children to be the kite in our logo; to fly high, thrive and flourish both academically and personally.

As a new Headteacher, working as part of a team with the Trust's other Principals was a game-changer. I had an accomplished mentor assigned from day one, a supportive and personalised 'new to Headship' programme of CPD, and a highly skilled set of professional partners who I know will help, if needed. Aside from other school leaders, the MAT core team has worked with me to develop my understanding of 'outside the classroom' skills, like finance, operating systems and HR – it truly was a Dream Team as a new Headteacher!

Working together, the Trust and I have enhanced the school's leadership capacity, refreshed the

curriculum, provided professional development opportunities and enriched our learning environment. Importantly, I am delighted that Bowling Green Academy has maintained its uniqueness while benefiting from Trust-wide systems of rapid and sustained improvement.

During the Ofsted inspection, Bowling Green's performance was highly celebrated in regards to pupil outcomes, our wider offer within the community and children's day-to-day experience in school. Our report notes that, 'Parents and carers appreciated the culture of high expectations in the school', 'leaders (including those within the Trust) have an accurate evaluation (of school) ... working with staff to swiftly make improvements' and, of course, our wonderful children, who are described as having character and maturity that is 'truly breath-taking'.

Bowling Green Academy's motto is 'Achieving Together' and that is something that the Trust does exceedingly well; share, care and allow everyone to flourish.

***\*Since Bowling Green's inspection, I have continued on my own personal journey of development, stepping up from Principal to Executive Principal of both Bowling Green and Trust newcomer Marsden Junior School, thanks to the Trust's investment in talent management.***



# Together

## Financial Strategy

The aim of the Trust is that each academy and designation achieves an in-year balanced budget in order to ensure financial sustainability in future years.

The Accounts of the Trust are the responsibility of Trustees, however, Trustees are supported by the work of the CFOO and Finance Team, who ensure that proper procedures are in place for the safeguarding of funds and that the requirements of the Academy Trust Handbook (ATH) are observed at all times. The Trustees and CFOO are further supported by a programme of termly external assurance that is in addition to the annual audit.

Our financial strategy adheres to the ATH requirements that the Trust must approve a balanced budget each year. We extend this principle to the individual constituent academies and designations held by the Great Heights Academy Trust whereby each academy / designation must have an annual balanced budget, which, in line with the ATH, can draw on unspent funds brought forward from previous years. However, in line with our financial aim, the Trust expects all academies / designations to achieve / be working towards an in-year balanced budget.

The Trust has a separate Finance Committee that assists the Trust Board in its duties to

consider the sound management of the Trust's finances, future forecasting, monitoring, internal controls, audit, risk management and value for money. In addition, the Trust Board receives financial information six times a year to ensure that appropriate action is being taken to maintain financial viability including addressing variances between the budget and actual income and expenditure and reporting on in-year and end of year balances. The Chair of Trustees and the Chair of the Finance Committee receive this information each month.

The Trustees consider three-year budget forecasts for each academy / designation. Key performance indicator analysis and benchmarking is also undertaken to enable comparison of the performance of the academies of the Trust with each other, as well as with other academies.

The Trust has clear Financial Schemes of Delegation for the Trust; the academies; and the designations to ensure effective financial control across all levels within the Trust.

The Trust has existing financial software systems that each academy utilises and that all new academies would be required to adopt so that central financial controls, monitoring and reporting are effectively and efficiently achieved.

The Trust Board reviews the usage of all specific grant funding to ensure its effective use and impact, as well as ensuring compliance with the relevant conditions of grant. A review of grant usage is carried out with each academy at its point of joining the Trust.



# Together

## Central Team Structure

**Supported by External School Improvement Partners:**  
Alan Giles & Jonathan Johnson.

**Supported by SEND Advisor:**  
Gill Robinson.

### School Improvement

**Director of SI:** Dani Worthington  
**Deputy Director of SI (Secondary):** Roz Wood-Ives  
**Executive Principals:** Steve Dixon, Andrew Midgley, Jimmy Sayles, Helen Crowther & Jamie Stuttard  
**Designation Leaders:** Adam Harris (Great Heights English Hub), Hollie Lawless (AA Teamworks SCITT), Jess Mellor (Great Heights Research School) & Lianne DeVilliers (Great Heights Partner Provision - Medical Needs)  
**Administrators:** Samantha Leeming & Maria McFadden

*Supported by all academy & designation leaders, managers and delivery teams.*

### Leadership & Governance

**Strategic Leadership (CEO):** Amanda Bennett  
**Director of Governance:** Andrew Midgley  
**Director of SI:** Dani Worthington  
**CFOO:** Jayne Firth  
**Leadership Administration:** Nicola Foulkes

*Supported by Leeds Governance Support Service (Helen Ward) - Governance professional. NGA and CST guidance.*

### Trust Board

Chair of the Trust Board - Carlton Midgley  
CEO - Amanda Bennett  
CFOO - Jayne Firth

### Workforce

**Workforce Strategic Leader (CFOO):** Jayne Firth  
**Executive Principals - leaders & alignment:** Andrew Midgley  
**Director of People:** Jane Simpson  
**HR Manager:** Katherine Humphreys  
**Recruitment Officers:** Hayley Drummond and Laura Gonzalez  
**HR Officer:** Julie Ware

*Supported by EducateHR Ltd services.*

### Finance & Operations

**Strategic Leader (CFOO):** Jayne Firth  
**Executive Principals - leaders & alignment:** Andrew Midgley  
**Estates Management, Premises, Health & Safety, Ofsted Reporting and Attendance - Head of Business Support:** Julie Wilkinson, supported by Molly Martin, Apprentice Business Admin: Lauren Kiraly and School Business Managers in our academies  
**IT - Digital Infrastructure Manager:** Adam Hutchinson, supported by Kieran Chappell, Lewis Moorhouse and IT staff in our academies  
**Finance - Deputy CFO:** John Priestley, **Management Accountant:** Kay Hobson, **Finance Manager:** Iram Rashid, supported by Joanne Goodrum, Jorja Nuttall, Fran McKay and finance staff in our academies  
**Marketing & Communications - Marketing & Communications Manager:** India Bagley, supported by Jonathan Pascall

*Supported by academy leaders & managers across departments.*

*Achieving excellence together*



# Together

## Collaborative work

We prioritise building strong collaborations and partnerships delivering and supporting beyond our trust settings to a broad reach of partners, we see the strength of our culture as all in our trust see themselves as both givers and receivers of support.

Current collaborations include:

- National and regional commissions with the Department of Education and also the EEF on school improvement support to vulnerable schools - GHAT English Hub designation providing tailored support to schools on phonics and early language and Research School designation communicating research evidence and practice across our region.
- National and Local Authority collaborative work including colleagues' membership of forums and partnership boards, currently including ESFA Steering Group, English Hub Council, Calderdale Strategic Board, Calderdale Admission Forum, Kirklees Partnership Board and Kirklees Safeguarding Partnership Board.
- Regional support from our trust teams, through commissioned school to school support in Kirklees and Leeds, school improvement work in 3 independent SEMH schools across Calderdale and Rochdale, Medical Needs Partnership and

Board representation and with membership of a Kirklees Associate Learning Partner.

In addition, we engage in reciprocal support arrangements including membership of governance boards of other trusts and academies, audits and sharing best practice with HR, digital infrastructure and school improvement teams.



# Together

## Teacher Training Offer



AA Teamworks SCITT has been in operation since 2015. The SCITT is well positioned to support our schools with recruitment:

- We have trained over 100 local teachers since inception across primary and secondary phases including hard to recruit subjects such as science, maths and English in response to local partner needs
- AA Teamworks works in collaboration with practitioners and leaders from across the trust to deliver a high- quality SCITT curriculum programme alongside our ongoing partnership with the University of Huddersfield
- We are partnered with schools across the primary and secondary phases in Calderdale and Kirklees who support local delivery, mentoring and placements
- High-quality mentor development programme to drive up standards of teaching and learning beyond the classroom of trainees.

The relationship with the Great Heights Research School, which is at the heart of the partnership, has ensured that trainees keep abreast of current academic thinking in relation to educational effectiveness.

This also ensures that trainees are committed to their own lifelong improvement as a practitioner.

Our programme is designed to make trainees think, reflect and to support their understanding of effective classroom practice which ensures that trainees are particularly well-equipped with the subject knowledge and teaching pedagogy they need as they begin their teaching career.

### Notable successes

- 100% of trainees would recommend the programme to other applicants
- Working in collaboration with 5 other SCITT partnerships to share practice and marketing – seeking collaborative working to maximise local recruitment. This resulted in being 1 of only 3 national partnerships awarded three year allocations by the DfE in 2016 for the quality of innovation and partnership working
- High employment rates across all programmes with more than 50% being employed directly in SCITT local partnership schools – meeting local needs
- Awarded reaccreditation status for the new provision starting 2024/25

Visit: [aateamworksscitt.org](https://aateamworksscitt.org)



# Together

## Our Research School

Great Heights Research School: West Yorkshire was designated in 2016 by the EEF and DfE to connect teachers and schools to evidence informed practice. The School's remit is to work across the geographic area of West Yorkshire.

Great Heights Research School works to provide a professional learning offer to schools and MATs across the region in addition to the remit of training research informed colleagues. Additionally, the team sit on several boards to support future and further research informed programmes and offers across schools and early years settings.

The Research School's key specific areas of expertise are literacy, metacognition, implementation and Teaching Assistants. The School has a flexible and knowledgeable team of ELEs/Evidence Champions who have helped to build capacity and future proof its work.

At a management level the Head of Research School supports each of the Principals within Great Heights Academy Trust in finding and using research evidence to inform decision making, for example in choosing diagnostics and interventions for speech and language delay. Each of the Trust schools' academy improvement plans are underpinned fully by the evidence on both



**Great Heights**  
Research School  
West Yorkshire

Supported by the Education Endowment Foundation



implementation and on the evidence surrounding effective teaching.

### Fixing Fluency

Fixing Fluency is an evidence-informed programme developed by Great Heights Research School, designed to enhance reading fluency among primary-age pupils, particularly those aged 7 to 11. The programme addresses the critical role of fluency as a bridge between decoding and comprehension, enabling pupils to read accurately, automatically, and with proper expression.

In June 2024, Jessica Mellor, Head of the Research School, received a £25,000 award from the Let Teachers SHINE competition to further develop Fixing Fluency. The initial phase of the project involves 900 children across schools in Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds, and Bradford, with plans for broader implementation.

The programme provides comprehensive resources for leaders, teachers, and pupils, including training sessions, session plans, slides, and assessment tools. Training is offered to both class teachers and senior leaders to ensure effective implementation and a shared understanding of the approach.

**Visit: [researchschool.org.uk/greatheights](https://researchschool.org.uk/greatheights)**





## Together

### English Hub

Great Heights English Hub was designated in 2018 with a remit to work with schools in Kirklees, Calderdale and Leeds to promote a love of reading and support schools to provide excellent phonics and early language teaching.

Great Heights English Hub is proud to be one of only 34 English Hubs nationally who were selected for their expertise in teaching reading and to support schools in their surrounding area: [www.englishhubs.net](http://www.englishhubs.net)

Since 2018 as the Hub programme has developed, it has offered a variety of medium level and intensive level support to schools across Calderdale, Kirklees and Leeds including showcase events, conferences, in-school audits, resourcing support and in-school intensive support for Reading Leaders.

### Notable successes

- Schools supported intensively by the English Hub programme outperformed other schools by around 7 percentage points, when comparing the change in year 1 PSC results between pre-pandemic (2016/17 to 2018/19) and 2021/22.
- The Great Heights Hub has played and continues to play a key role in writing the English Hub's national early language programme.
- The Hub now has a team of 15 Literacy Specialists that can provide tailored support to schools.
- Over 200 schools have received an in-school

## English Hubs

### Great Heights English Hub

audit of provision resulting in an action plan to support the development of best practice in early reading and identifying those schools who would benefit from financial support.

The expertise within our English Hub is extremely valuable to both support partner schools and also provide high expectations and support for our Trust schools. We ensure best practice in early reading across our MAT in the following ways:

- A cross-trust representative English Hub strategic board is in place to support delivery for all and quality assure the work of the Hub alongside providing professional challenge
- The Hub Lead carries out a full audit of provision in new schools joining our Trust
- An identified reading leader is in every school and receives half-termly support from the Hub to ensure best practice in early reading and interventions where children are not on track
- Hub expertise is available when our Trust schools are writing their SDPs
- Many of the Hub's Literacy Specialist team come from within the Trust and are given extensive training. This provides MAT schools with self-sustaining on-site support.
- A MAT-wide expectations document based on the English Hub Challenge checklist is used to support all school leaders in monitoring early reading provision in their schools.

Visit: [greateighthsenglishhub.org](http://greateighthsenglishhub.org)

*Achieving excellence together*



# Together

## Partner Provision



Great Heights Partner Provision provides a high quality alternative education for children and young people with health (including social, emotional and mental health) or medical needs.

Our provision is available for all children of compulsory school age residing in the Kirklees Local Authority area who cannot attend school because of illness and health needs. We aim to work closely with mainstream schools to ensure pupils are provided with the same opportunities and education as their peers.

The provision is accessed via referral from the mainstream school and must be supported by medical advice from a consultant.

### Key Performance Indicators

- 1:1 education (in severe medical cases)
- Outreach education (in severe medical cases)
- Group education
- Paired education
- Remote learning/online learning

The aim of the provision is, where possible, to support the pupil towards reintegration back into mainstream education when they are well enough.

We have a range of staff with extensive knowledge of supporting pupils who are unable to access mainstream school, including a Personal Development and Wellbeing Coach, a primary specialist and a range of secondary trained specialists.

## Spotlight on a Great Heights Senior Leader

### Talent Management in Action



**Lianne De Villiers**  
Head of Great Heights  
Partner Provision

I am delighted to introduce myself as the Head of Partner Provision. We are a nurturing provision where inclusivity and diversity are celebrated as the foundations of our principles. We empower our pupils with the knowledge, skills and values needed to become citizens poised for success in the next step of their education.

It is my fourth year working at Great Heights. During my time here, I have successfully achieved many of my career goals, receiving invaluable support from exceptional leaders throughout this journey.

Working collaboratively with the designations in the Trust has enabled me to acquire a wealth of information and knowledge about all aspects of education. I have drawn upon the latest

research from the EEF when implementing new systems effectively.

Support from the core teams such as HR, operating systems and finance has been outstanding, and guidance from the school improvement team has empowered me as a leader to drive forward the Trust and Partner Provision's vision and aims.

It is an honour to lead such an inspiring provision, and I am privileged to work with such incredible children and young people.

I take great pride in being part of this Trust and I am grateful for the opportunity to be part of a Trust that positively impacts the lives and education of so many children and young people. As a team, we are 'Achieving Excellence Together'.

# Together

## *Alexandra Fuller reflects on her first 18 months as Principal at The Mirfield Free Grammar*

I am exceptionally privileged and proud to be the Principal of The Mirfield Free Grammar.

The Mirfield Free Grammar has an inspirational, positive, caring and inclusive environment, where learning is brought to life, and all students can achieve their full academic, personal and social potential. Everyone at The MFG strives to 'achieve excellence together' and this vision is embedded in 'THE MFG Character' across our school community, alongside Quality First Teaching.

We endeavour to create well-rounded, happy and confident young people who are able to contribute positively within the community. I am a firm believer that developing THE MFG Character of Tenacity, Health, Equity, Morality, Flourish and Generosity in all our students will enable us to achieve this.

As I have developed in my role as Principal at The MFG the support from everyone at Great Heights has ensured that I have been able to gain a wealth of information and knowledge around all aspects of the role. The continued support at a formal level has been invaluable but also the support with specific questions when they arose has been crucial.

The support regarding school improvement has been critical to ensure my vision for the school has been implemented and continuously being reviewed and adapted to drive improvements. It has been excellent to be able to work collaboratively with our

Trust's Research School, English Hub and School Improvement teams to develop a school improvement plan that is research driven but also supports the individual needs of our school. We have developed the Quality of Education vision by ensuring there is a connection between all elements, leading to our approach called 'Essential Creative Connections to creating 'Quality First Teaching''. We have worked in partnership to ensure we have a research-based approach to Quality First Teaching at The MFG and will continue to work together to embed this approach within our Academy Improvement plans.

During this academic year, I experienced my first Ofsted inspection as a Principal. The support from across the Trust enabled the inspection to go well and drive further school improvements following the inspection.

I have felt empowered by the Great Heights vision, culture and approach to school improvement. It has also been wonderful to see the opportunities our Trust brings to all staff within The MFG. We have a Research Lead within the school, staff delivering on the ITT programmes and staff on both the Research school and English Hub boards.

My journey as Principal at The MFG has had its rewarding moments and its challenging ones, but I feel I have the support from all areas of the Trust to work together to ensure that we achieve excellence for many years to come.



## Where are we?

Great Heights Academy Trust  
Riverside Mills,  
Saddleworth Road, Elland, HX5 0RY

01422 761019

[greatheightstrust.org.uk](http://greatheightstrust.org.uk)

Bowling Green Academy  
Stainland,  
Halifax, HX4 9HU

01422 374863

[bowlinggreenacademy.org.uk](http://bowlinggreenacademy.org.uk)

Carlinghow Academy  
Ealand Road,  
Batley, WF17 8HT

01924 326371

[carlinghowacademy.org.uk](http://carlinghowacademy.org.uk)

Colne Valley High School  
Gillroyd Lane,  
Linthwaite, HD7 5SP

01484 848680

[thecvhs.co.uk](http://thecvhs.co.uk)

The Greetland Academy  
EYFS & Key Stage 1  
Saddleworth Rd, Greetland, HX4 8LZ  
Key Stage 2  
School Street, Greetland, HX4 8JB

Tel: 01422 372893

[greetlandacademy.org.uk](http://greetlandacademy.org.uk)

Marsden Junior School  
Manchester Road,  
Huddersfield, HD7 6EP

01484 843588

[themjs.org](http://themjs.org)

Nields Academy  
Nields Road,  
Slaithwaite, HD7 5HT

01484 842154

[nields.ghat.org.uk](http://nields.ghat.org.uk)

Raynville Academy  
Cross Aston Grove,  
Bramley, Leeds, LS13 2TQ

Tel: 0113 257 9590

[admin@raynville.ghat.org.uk](mailto:admin@raynville.ghat.org.uk)

The Mirfield Free Grammar  
Kitson Hill Road,  
Mirfield, WF14 9EZ

01924 483660

[themfg.co.uk](http://themfg.co.uk)

West Vale Academy  
Stainland Road,  
Greetland, HX4 8LS

01422 372804

[westvaleacademy.org.uk](http://westvaleacademy.org.uk)

AA Teamworks West Yorkshire SCITT  
West Vale Academy, Stainland Road,  
Greetland, HX4 8LS

01422 761019 (Option 6)

[aateamworksscitt.org](http://aateamworksscitt.org)

Great Heights English Hub  
School Street,  
Greetland, HX4 8JB

01422 761019 - Option 7

[greatheightsenglishhub.org](http://greatheightsenglishhub.org)

Great Heights Partner Provision  
Riverside Mills, Saddleworth Road,  
Elland, HX5 0RY

01924 326371

[greatheightstrust.org.uk/partner-provision](http://greatheightstrust.org.uk/partner-provision)

Great Heights Research School  
Riverside Mills, Saddleworth Road,  
Elland, HX5 0RY

07828 886534

[researchschool.org.uk/greatheights](http://researchschool.org.uk/greatheights)