

Inspiring Excellence, Inspiring Partnerships, Inspiring Individuality, Inspiring Futures.



2020-2021

# Annual Impact Report

Inspire Partnership Multi-Academy Trust



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# Welcome from our Chair of Trustees

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I am very pleased to welcome you to the Inspire Partnership Trust's first Annual Report. We believe it is important to share our approach and achievements, and think an annual report is a fitting vehicle for this purpose.

The report has had input from a range of stakeholders and seeks to inform you of the way the children's welfare and learning has been cared for and addressed during the last two difficult and disrupted school years. In future years, we wish the document to evolve in order to further demonstrate that we are truly accountable to those we serve.

Those who lead the Inspire Partnership Trust, serving in a voluntary capacity as Members or Trustees or employed as professional officers, are accountable to the Secretary of State and the Department for Education but are also primarily accountable to the pupils and parents/carers in our nine primary academies in the Wakefield Local Authority, each serving different communities. Every child in every academy is important to us as are their parents/carers and those from outside organisations and businesses who contribute in any way to the smooth running of them. We also have accountability to those who work within our organisation, as it is through their efforts that we can deliver the very best education.

Since its inception, the Trust, under the guidance of Sue Vickerman as Chief Executive Officer, has allowed the academies to have as much autonomy as possible whilst working closely together on teaching and learning and endeavouring to deliver services, which provide excellent value for money. It is hoped

an annual report will give the opportunity to reflect on where we are in delivering the service that every one of our stakeholders is entitled to expect.

The pandemic, in many ways, has brought the Trust and its academies even closer together. Practices have had to adapt and evolve but we have not moved away from our core purpose, which is to make sure our academies provide a safe haven where all children can achieve their full potential.

I hope you find the Annual Report informative and that it demonstrates our commitment to excellence and to ensuring that we serve you and your communities as effectively as we possibly can.



**John North**  
Chair of Trustees

# Welcome from the CEO

I am very proud to present this first Annual Impact Report.

Our Trust was established in 2016 with just two schools. This has now grown to a group of nine primary schools, all located within the Wakefield area.

From the very start of our journey, we were determined to create a trust which would respect the values and uniqueness of each school at the same time as understanding that trust, autonomy and accountability go hand in hand. I am proud to work with a group of Members and Trustees who take that commitment most seriously.

We have created a network of professional development opportunities to ensure all our people are highly effective and that strong leadership pathways are in place. We have a strong induction process, high quality CPD for teachers new to the profession and leadership CPD for people at every level.

Sharing of best practice and its rapid dissemination across all schools is a key feature of the trust, school improvement is a joint responsibility. Improved pupil outcomes are secured through collaborative working and learning opportunities.

Partnerships with our communities, our parents and other key people involved in the lives of our children are of upmost importance, engaging all stakeholders in promoting the highest of standards.

We adopt innovative approaches to providing services and have developed economies of scale to the benefit of all children and staff including financial management, premises services, HR support and IT.

We are totally committed to investment in the future of all children in our schools through high quality learning experiences to raise standards and improve outcomes.

We are one professional community. *Our trust vision is to build a community of schools - inspiring excellence in everyone.*

Over the last 18 months, the pandemic has obviously had a huge impact on all our lives and has cast a shadow over our work. However, at the same time it has cemented us more than ever as one trust where everyone has stepped up from Estate Managers, Operations Managers, Finance Managers, School Leaders, School Staff, Trustees and Governors in order to support each other and ensure that at the same time as looking after everyone's safety, high quality education has been delivered to our children.

We have taken the opportunity, at the end of this academic year to reflect on what we have achieved over the course of the last 12 months. Our developments and progress are clearly outlined in this report.

I hope you enjoy reading this document, that you feel assured by our progress and reassured that we are clearly focused on moving forwards in the future.



**Sue Vickerman**  
CEO



# Facts about our Trust

Our Trust is made up of nine primary academies, all within the Wakefield District.





## Academies Ofsted Rating

**5** Good

**2** Outstanding

**1** Requires Improvement

**1** Inadequate\*

\*Inspected prior to joining IPMAT.



Inspire  
Academies

**9**



Staff

**372**



Learners

**2393**

Nursery | 351

Primary | 2042



Governance  
Local Governing

Boards | 76

Trustees | 9

Members | 5

## CPD Opportunities and Programmes

- Half termly development days for HTs
- NQT programme
- RQT programme
- Subject leaders programme
- Aspiring leaders programme
- Leadership development programme
- Termly ½ day network meetings:
  - SENDCo
  - EYFS
  - Year 2
  - Year 6
  - Computing
  - Maths Leaders
  - Curriculum Leaders
  - SBO weekly full day meetings / training

## Governance Programme

- Induction for New Governors
- Termly Chairs Meetings
- Safeguarding Training
- Safer Recruitment Training
- Managing Allegations Training
- Curriculum Awareness Training
- Pupil Premium Awareness Training
- SEND Awareness Training
- OFSTED Framework Training

## Central Team



**Sue Vickerman**

CEO and Accounting Officer



**Leah Charlesworth**

Deputy CEO and School Improvement Partner



**Tracey Fallon**

Chief Operating Officer



**Tracy Jackson**

Chief Financial Officer

**Jo  
Batty**

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PA to the Exec Team

**Alison  
Ramsey**

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Business Operations Officer

**Alex  
Swithenbank**

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Estates Manager

# Headteacher Group

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**Katie  
Harris**

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Headteacher -  
Gawthorpe Community  
Academy

**Katie  
Lea**

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Headteacher -  
Ackton Pastures  
Primary Academy

**Sally  
Henshall**

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Executive Headteacher -  
South Hiendley Primary  
Academy and Grove Lea  
Primary School

**Paul  
Quarry**

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Headteacher -  
Fitzwilliam Primary  
School

**Annabel  
Berry**

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Headteacher -  
Towngate Primary  
Academy

**Rachael  
Taylor**

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Headteacher -  
Half Acres Primary  
Academy

**Jane  
Littlewood**

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Headteacher -  
Girnhill Infant School

**Victoria  
Williams**

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Headteacher -  
Ash Grove Primary  
Academy



# Our Strategic Aims

## Our Vision

### Building a Community of Schools – Inspiring Excellence in Everyone

Inspiring Excellence, Inspiring Partnerships

Inspiring Individuality, Inspiring Futures.

## Our Values

At Inspire Partnership Multi-Academy Trust, our values are central to all we do:

### Respect

Where respect is the foundation of each school community, built upon professionalism, appreciation for diversity and embracing individuality.

### Responsibility

Where responsibility, trust and openness underpin all we do. Forming a shared responsibility for professional collaboration and individual accountability, we make a difference to the children in the communities in which we serve.

### Recognition

Where all individuals are recognised for their dedication and commitment leading to shared success for all.

### Resilience

Where all individuals are resilient: striving for excellence, embracing challenge, collaborating with confidence and courage.

# The Strategic Aims of the Inspire Partnership MAT

## Inspiring Excellence

- We inspire, engage, challenge and support all our children to achieve excellent learning outcomes, equipping them with the values, skills, qualities and aptitudes necessary to be responsible citizens in the future. Setting high standards under a framework of excellent teaching and a focus on continual improvement.
- We are committed to continually developing a highly effective team of people with a shared passion to deliver the best possible outcomes. We provide our people with an environment to continually develop, where they can teach, grow and build a career and are supported to do their best work.
- Best practice across the Trust with clear oversight and budgeting ensures we have financial sustainability, resilience and value for money across the Trust.
- We provide a safe and excellent learning environment for everyone.

## Inspiring Partnerships

- Our family of schools serve unique communities with their own distinct characteristics. We believe in maintaining individuality, whilst harnessing the power of working together.
- As a family of schools, we take collective responsibility for optimum outcomes for all children, sharing best practice, collaborating and challenging one another to deliver excellent teaching and learning.
- We understand the importance of working constructively with a wide range of partner organisations and the advantage to all children of shared learning and expertise.
- Across the Trust there are strong governance structures, where challenge and support are paramount.

## Inspiring Individuality

- We encourage a learning culture that allows for individuality, developing each child's independence, optimising their life chances and promoting a can-do attitude.
- We acknowledge and encourage the individual ethos of each of our schools.
- We foster a culture of the highest professional standards, establishing a set of core principles with respect at the heart of all we do.
- Our people are at the heart of all we do, and their wellbeing is paramount to ensuring a happy, caring and safe environment.

## Inspiring Futures

- Our people matter and the future life chances of our children depend on them. Effective leadership and succession planning is essential, and we are committed to developing the potential of all our people, recognising achievement and creating opportunities.
- We have a clear strategy for the growth of our Trust.
- We have an ambition to be the best at what we do and to be the first choice for pupils and parents.

# Governance

We are a multi-academy trust which is responsible for operating and maintaining a number of academies in the Wakefield Local Authority. We are both a company limited by guarantee and an exempt charity, regulated by the Secretary of State for Education.

Our constitution and objectives are set out in our Memorandum and Articles of Association. We are also bound by the requirements of our Master Funding Agreement, as well as by the provisions of the Academies Financial Handbook and a range of other pieces of government guidance and legislation.

We do not have shareholders, but we do have **Members**, who provide the highest tier of non-executive oversight. The five Members bring with them a wealth of experience from the world of education and business.

The most important tier of our governance is our Board of **Trustees**. We have nine Trustees who also bring with them much experience from the world of education, finance, HR and public services. Trustees are appointed by Members or co-opted onto the Board by other Trustees. They are Trustees for the purposes of charity law and also fulfil the role of appointed Directors in regard to company legislation. Any appointments or resignations must be reported to the Members.

Trustees are accountable to the Members, to the Secretary of State and also to the communities served by our academies for the performance of our Trust and our academies. They are required to have systems in place by which they can fulfil their legal duties, as well as monitoring and scrutinising the work of the executive.

Trustees also have responsibility for key decision making in respect of aspects of our operations and are required to act, both collectively and individually, in the best interests of our Trust and our academies and in line with our Ethical

Leadership statement and other policies. They, along with all those involved in our governance, have a strictly strategic role.

Trustees may not delegate their accountability for the performance of the Trust, but, in practice, they do delegate the responsibility for many aspects of our operation as outlined below. Trustees then hold to account the bodies and individuals with 'delegated responsibility' on behalf of the Members, the Secretary of State and the communities we serve.

## Trustees delegate responsibility:-

- To a number of **Trust Board sub-committees**, each of which consists of a subset of Trustees, may be established either permanently or temporarily and has delegated responsibility for aspects of decision making, monitoring and scrutiny. The sub-committees are: Audit & Resources; Standards & Curriculum; and a Pay Committee.
- To the **Local Governance Board** (LGB) of each academy. The membership of which is drawn from the local community (including two parents and one member of the academy's staff) and which has delegated responsibility for the detailed monitoring and scrutiny of the academy's performance.
- To the **Chief Executive Officer** (CEO) who is appointed by the Board and who has delegated responsibility for the day-to-day strategic and operational leadership and management of all aspects of the Trust's activity. The CEO, in turn, delegates responsibility for specific aspects of the Trust's operations to members of the **Senior Leadership Team** (SLT), and to the Headteachers, who are accountable, via the CEO, to the Trustees. The CEO also delegates responsibility for the day-to-day management of each academy to the **Headteacher** of that academy.

The Trustees believe it is important to know the academies and the areas which they serve and to be known by the Headteachers, members of the LGBs, the staff and the children.

In order to achieve this, Trustees visit an academy each term to meet the Headteacher, the Chair of the LGB and to visit classrooms to see the children at work with their teachers and support staff. Unfortunately, the restrictions caused by Covid-19 have caused this to be put on hold since the Summer Term of 2020. The Chair of the Trustees also has a termly meeting with the Chairs of the LGBs to update them on issues and to work together on improving governance within the Trust. In normal circumstances, these meetings would be held at each of the academies in turn.

## Trust Members and Trustees

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**John  
North**

Chair of the  
Trust Board



**Mark  
Ellerker**

Member



**Rob  
Barracough**

Member



**Stuart  
Tottles**

Member



**Helen  
Ranson**

Member



**Karen  
Partridge**

Trustee



**Charles  
Gray**

Trustee



**Clare  
Norfolk**

Trustee



**Graham  
Worsdale**

Trustee



**Carolyn  
North**

Trustee



**Barry  
Smith**

Trustee



**Paul  
Arundel**

Trustee



**John  
Cripps**

Trustee



# Our Journey

## Headline Figures

- The proportion of pupils across the Trust achieving a **Good Level of Development is above national average**.
- The outcomes of **disadvantaged pupils** in the Early Years has **significantly improved** over time with disadvantaged pupils on some schools outperforming non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.
- Teacher Assessment** in reading, writing and maths and RWM combined at KS1 have been consistently **above national average** since 2016.
- Outcomes from the **phonics screening check** have consistently improved year on year and have been **above the national figure** for the past 2 years.
- Outcomes at the end of KS2 in **reading, writing and maths and RWM** combined are **above national average** at the expected standard.
- Outcomes for **disadvantaged children** in RWM combined at the end of KS2 have **improved by 21%** over the past 3 years and are now close to national.

## Educational Outcomes

The academic achievement of our pupils is paramount – ensuring pupils receive a high quality education that allows them to achieve to the best of their ability is a core part of our purpose as a Trust. We believe that our children deserve a curriculum that delivers powerful knowledge, develops their academic vocabulary and equips them to be successful in life. This, in turn enables them to successfully navigate the external assessments that demonstrate our impact as a Trust.

## Our Journey

- We were fortunate to have a number of academies within our family who had excellent practice to share.
- Whilst many academies performed well across all measures, some performance was mixed.
- We had a wealth of effective systems in place, but these were not consistent across all academies.

## Where are we now?

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- We have agreed **high expectations** for the success of our children.
- We have worked together to agree **highly consistent practice** across all of our academies and have put into place standardised systems where these have benefit in order to streamline the way we work and reduce workload for our staff.
- We have implemented **clear processes, support and structures around assessment** which means that we are learning from and using best practice to secure improved outcomes for all pupils.
- We have secured **consistently better outcomes** at all measures across the Trust year on year to 2019.

### EYFS

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% Achieving GLD		
	2018	2019
	Attainment	Attainment
<b>IPMAT</b>	<b>65.4</b>	<b>72.6</b>
<b>National Average</b>	<b>71.5</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>Gap from National Average</b>	<b>-6.1</b>	<b>+0.6</b>

### End of Key Stage 1

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% Achieving ARE in Reading Writing and Maths		
	2018	2019
	Attainment	Attainment
<b>IPMAT</b>	<b>73.9</b>	<b>71.4</b>
<b>National Average</b>	<b>61.0</b>	<b>65.0</b>
<b>Gap from National Average</b>	<b>+12.9</b>	<b>+6.4</b>

### Phonics (End of Year 1)

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% Passing the Phonics Check		
	2018	2019
	Attainment	Attainment
<b>IPMAT</b>	<b>81.3</b>	<b>84.1</b>
<b>National Average</b>	<b>80.3</b>	<b>82.0</b>
<b>Gap from National Average</b>	<b>+1.0</b>	<b>+2.1</b>

### End of Key Stage 2

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% Achieving ARE in Reading Writing and Maths		
	2018	2019
	Attainment	Attainment
<b>IPMAT</b>	<b>80.0</b>	<b>83.9</b>
<b>National Average</b>	<b>78.0</b>	<b>78.0</b>
<b>Gap from National Average</b>	<b>+2.0</b>	<b>+5.9</b>

# Academy Improvement

We believe in supporting ongoing improvement in all aspects of the work of our academies – Inspiring Excellence. We know that **rigorous and relentless focus** on securing the very best for our children is key to delivering our core purpose.

## Our Journey

- Academy improvement was limited due to resources and scale.
- School improvement support was needed from external sources when issues arose.
- Some leaders were not fully engaged with the vision of the Trust and so didn't enact the developments agreed within their academies.

## Where are we now?

- Our **School Improvement Partner model** is now fully embedded into the school improvement cycle of the Trust with our own dedicated School improvement partner providing regular support and challenge to all leaders.

- A graduated response to support and challenge is in place so that leaders can be **appropriately and swiftly responsive** when issues arise.
- Bespoke networks that support improvement operate across our whole Trust and have had **significant impact** on developing key areas such as the development of the Trust curriculum model.
- **Consistent approaches** to all aspects of work are in place.
- Our school leaders operate as a team and provide **expertise across the Trust** in areas where they excel.
- There are regular opportunities for our leaders to come together and **learn from experts** and from each other.
- Local Governing Bodies are well supported and trained, they know their role in **supporting and challenging** all aspects of their academy's work.



# Professional Collaboration

We are a family of academies, populated by many very talented academy leaders, and enabling them to work effectively together means that we are able not only to secure improvement but also to avoid duplication and repetition of effort. **We celebrate innovation and share expertise and knowledge, learning from the very best.**

- Our EWO and Trust Inclusion Officer work collaboratively across our schools to support with best practice when challenges arise.
- Local governing bodies have access to a range of training and development that supports them in their role as well as the half termly chairs network attended by all chairs.
- Our reputation in this area has led to us supporting many external schools through our provision.

## Our Journey

- Lots of leaders and staff were talented and doing innovative and exciting things within their own school.
- Academies were delivering their own CPD and support for staff which could have been delivered at scale.
- Academies were struggling with the enormity of some larger challenges such as curriculum redesign.

## Where are we now?

- Our Headteachers meet every week on a virtual platform with face to face half termly development days.
- Individual networks take place every half term in order to **support improvement and development** in key areas such as the Early Years and SEND.
- Curriculum leaders in individual subjects have formed working networks so that we can collaboratively develop the Trust curriculum model, **learning from each other, sharing the workload and avoiding duplication.**





# Early Career Support

We know that in order to sustain our high quality offer we need to develop all of our staff and **invest in their future**. This is particularly the case for those teachers, new to the profession in their NQT and RQT year. Ensuring that we wrap support and development around these teachers, right from the start is a core expectation for our Trust.

## Our Journey

- Provision locally for Early Career Teachers was limited and sometimes was not effective.
- The statutory expectations for NQTs were not always fulfilled by every school.
- The experience of each NQT and RQT was not consistent and embedded across every school.

## Where are we now?

- **Trained mentors** are in place across every school and they have a clear understanding of the expectations that must be in place for every NQT and RQT.

- Every early career teacher has in place a tailored **in-school induction** programme to develop them.
- Our Early Career teachers receive **coaching and support** through their in-school programme.
- All Early Career teachers access a **comprehensive and bespoke** Trust training programme throughout the first 2 years of their tenure.
- All Early Career Teachers access the Early Career Framework through the local **Teaching School Hub**.
- The success of the support of all Early Career teachers is scrutinised through the Trusts **Quality Review process** each year.
- As a result, our early career teachers are successful in **securing and maintaining employment** within the profession and achieve consistently secure teaching swiftly that impacts positively on our children.



# People development and HR

At IPMAT, our staff are our most valuable asset. Ensuring that all our colleagues have access to professional high quality CPD supports them to perform to a high standard in our academies. We want to **inspire** all our colleagues to **achieve excellence** in all they do.

## Our Journey

Investment in our colleagues was sporadic and reactive with little opportunity to develop outstanding leaders. Collaboration and partnership working was limited and did not contribute to delivering the vision of the Trust.

## Where are we now?

Professional networks operate across the Trust ensuring best practice is shared and a **consistent approach** embedded in our academies. These networks include Headteachers, NQT, RQT, Curriculum leaders, School Business Officers, Premises Supervisors to name just a few.

We have a clear focus on the wellbeing of our colleagues providing access to an external **Health & Wellbeing Service** for all with a range of support programmes in place including access to confidential counselling, occupational health referrals and physiotherapy.

The Trust has implemented a number of **salary sacrifice schemes** for staff to benefit from and runs a series of pension briefings to keep staff updated.

The Trust has a dedicated external HR partner ready to support colleagues facing difficult situations.

The Trust has secured 38 placements under the **Kickstart scheme** providing opportunities for young people to gain experience and obtain transferable skills for their future employment.

# Safeguarding

Pupil safety and wellbeing is at the forefront of all we do in our academies: we believe that with rigorous processes for safeguarding adults and children, we embed a **culture of trust, transparency and security**. Our statutory responsibilities are at the core of our practice and all staff pride themselves on their holistic approach to safeguarding children.

## Our Journey

Initially, safeguarding – to the majority of our schools – was deemed an isolated role, a responsibility of only a small team of safeguarding officers in each school. Developments in our approach have led to a raised accountability and understanding of all staff – irrespective of role or position in school. The term safeguarding was explored further to develop colleagues' understanding of how a child is kept and made to feel safe and nurtured as an individual. It was at this point, the vision for safeguarding was born.

## Where are we now?

- We have secured a Seconded System Leader who works with each school to offer **guidance and support** on safeguarding practices and procedures, with a particular focus on safeguarding compliance.
- Each school has a pastoral team and a number of Safeguarding Officers in post who form an **active, collaborative group** with a well-rounded knowledge of current, local and wider issues.
- The **rigor and tenacity** of safeguarding in schools is strong, working in close partnership with outside agencies, offering collaboration, support and challenge.
- Regular updates, guidance and bulletins are shared with all staff and form key agenda items in each school.
- The trust works alongside a Safeguarding Advisor whose role is to offer **support and case-by-case guidance**. Regular training is offered through the Safeguarding Advisor which is disseminated to all stakeholders.



# Finance

The management of public funds is a vital component of the work of any trust – we have an obligation not only to make sure our overall financial position is secure but also to ensure that as much of our funding as possible is directed to where it will have the most impact.

## Our Journey

Headteachers were unsure of their academy budgets and finances and were not able to make informed decisions.

Financial planning was untimely and undertaken in a reactive manner.

Operational finance management was managed at school level with 9 separate bank accounts.

## Where are we now?

In January 2020, the Trust centralised its finance and business operations moving into a **central trust team of finance specialists** and school business officers working across 2 schools each. This has ensured a consistent approach and minimises potential risk and issues raised at audit level. Efficiencies have been realised with the move to one bank account and the development of the central team ensures all academies are professionally supported with finance and operations.

In April 2021, the Trust aligned teacher and support staff payroll to one main payroll resulting in significant efficiencies for HR/Payroll.

As at 31 August 2020, the Trust had a cumulative surplus of £1,407,361.

We have secured **significant efficiencies** through the use of group-wide procurement contracts, ensuring that services can be delivered at less cost than previously, while not impacting upon education budgets themselves.

New internal and external auditors have been appointed to ensure the financial systems and processes in place are fully **compliant and robust**.

There is a **fully transparent** financial and budget planning process which means that Headteachers are able to fully understand their financial position and deploy resource to where it is most needed most rapidly.



# Estates, Health & Safety

The Health and Safety of pupils, staff and visitors is paramount across the Trust. The Trust has a strong Health and Safety culture with rigorous robust systems to protect the Health and Safety of adults and children. Working closely with external professional third parties, we ensure our statutory responsibilities are addressed to a high standard and in a timely manner.

## Our Journey

Estates and Health and Safety is a strategic priority for Inspire Partnership MAT. An Estates, Health and Safety Officer was appointed in 2019 demonstrating our commitment to ensuring the statutory Estates, Health and Safety needs associated with the operation of our academies are met.

The Estates, Health and Safety Officer is qualified to Level 6 in Applied Health & Safety. This key role has enabled the Trust to develop a strategic approach raising accountability and understanding of all staff – irrespective of role or position in school.

This role also ensured a consistent approach was taken to the site risk assessment implemented during the COVID pandemic as well as providing central procurement of PPE and cleaning consumables for all academies.

**Inspire Partnership MAT secured £1,682,664 of CIF funding across 5 academies in 2020/21 through an exceptional collaboration with E3Cube. CIF funding has revitalised the image of Estates, Health and Safety across the Trust.**

## Where are we now?

- Each academy has an in-house **annual H&S review** with associated action plans for remedial action.
- Strong partnership links with external service providers ensures remedial works are addressed in a **timely and cost-effective** fashion.
- Each academy has a developing capital plan focusing on key areas for H&S developments with a strong central overview.
- The premises teams at each school has a designated point of contact for line management and Estates, H&S related queries.
- The Trust has a long term strategic plan for academy improvement through **Condition Improvement Funding (CIF)** and continues to explore other avenues for large scale developments and Estates, H&S investments into academies.
- Regular updates, guidance and bulletins are shared with all staff and form key agenda items in each school.
- Regular **Premises Network meetings** enable a platform to share best practice and deliver key training across the academies.
- The Trust has an appointed external Competent Person to support any complex health & safety issues.
- We are hoping to secure further funding in 2021/22 with CIF bids submitted valuing **£2,596,807** as well as additional lighting bids through SEEF.



# ICT

Technology is, of course, both the present and the future and the Covid-19 pandemic has brought this home to us all with something of a shock, at first, as we moved suddenly into the world of remote learning and working. Our learning from the pandemic has ensured access to the best learning technology for all in the future.

## Our Journey

- All academies had their own stand-alone IT structure meaning each academy operated in isolation from others.
- All academies had separate email systems meaning limited access to the full functionality of Office 365.

## Where are we now?

- We now have a single Windows domain across the Trust meaning that staff can work easily from any Trust site as well as from home.
- We have invested significantly across all academies to ensure hardware and software is **fit for purpose and standardised** across the Trust.
- We have installed 100Mb **full fibre broadband connections** into each of our academies to ensure high speed internet is available to all of our pupils.

- We now have a **single e-mail system** across the Trust giving full functionality to Office 365 allowing us to utilise technologies such as OneDrive, SharePoint online and 'Teams' calling.
- We have mobilised a remote learning and working strategy in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and are now able to ensure that learning can continue in the event of any academy closures.
- We have used the lessons learned from the pandemic to develop a **full blended learning strategy** which will deliver benefits in the coming months and years.
- Our curriculum offer has been enriched through the implementation of a range of online platforms meaning parents have been actively involved in their child's education.
- The children engage in an **ambitious Computing curriculum** using a range of technology following a consistent scheme of work in all Trust schools.
- We have invested in full class sets of iPads for all our academies meaning children have the opportunity to **purposely use technology** throughout the range of curriculum subjects.

# COVID-19

It would be wrong, in this year, to ignore the biggest single thing that has impacted on all of our work – the response to the global pandemic.

**We have been very clear throughout this period about two things:**

1. Safety is paramount, and has been embodied in our thorough approach to risk assessments and our adherence to government guidelines.
2. Our obligation to ensure that learning continues has meant we have embraced the possibilities of technology and remote engagement in ways we never thought possible.

**We have worked exceptionally closely in order to support our schools. This was introduced from the very start of the pandemic.**

- At the start of the pandemic daily Headteacher ‘teams’ meetings took place with the central team. These meetings were usually attended by the Chair of the Trust Board. These were slowly reduced to weekly meetings.
- Daily phone calls to Headteachers, focusing on wellbeing and safeguarding.
- Additional Local Governing Body meetings and Trustee meetings.
- Strong support from the premises team in securing additional resources and cleaning materials.
- Support for 3 COVID inspections.
- Risk assessments were shared with schools and regularly updated, in line with new Local and National guidance.
- Website information updated to give clear information about health and safety for parents.

- HR policies and practices were shared with schools and regularly updated, in line with new Local and National guidance.
- All schools effectively use the Microsoft remote learning platform.
- All staff have been given direct access to Insight counselling service.
- The minutes of the regular HT meetings reflect strong support from the Central team in managing the pandemic on a day to day basis.
- Where necessary Safeguarding policies were updated at Central level.
- Up to date safeguarding training was accessed by all schools.
- Following discussions with each HT fully costed catch up plans are in place in each school. These plans identify expected impact.



**Great work again from all the Ash Grove team. Thank you for all your hard work and for the online learning which is being set daily.**



**Work set on Seesaw was varied allowing my child to keep interest and develop knowledge. Great support from teacher setting work and comments when marking.**



**The interaction and feeling part of the class was so important for the children's mental health, as it was easy to feel isolated when they were home schooling.**



**As parents, we have been very happy with the support provided. The Teams daily meeting has been a lovely way for the children to see each other.**



**My child has enjoyed being at school despite the lockdown changes. She's making excellent progress and I'm very happy with the learning provision in school.**

## Contact Us

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