EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT AND ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK

HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

This Education Development and Assurance Framework (EDAF) sets out the Girls' Learning Trust's approach to ensuring the provision of high-quality education across all schools in the Trust. It is designed to support leaders, governors, trustees and Trust staff in planning, monitoring, and ensuring the provision of education in a way that is aligned, coherent, and responsive to individual school contexts.

While each school is different, this document provides a consistent framework of principles, roles, and activities that promote both innovation and accountability. It draws together the key strands of school development, assurance, and collaboration into a single, integrated model.

The EDAF should be seen as both a policy and a practical tool. It combines strategic intent with structured activity to ensure that all schools benefit from clearly defined expectations, appropriate oversight, and shared opportunities to learn and improve.

This document is structured in three parts and three appendices:

Part A: Policy sets out the purpose, principles, and statutory context for education development and assurance in the Trust, including key definitions and stakeholder responsibilities.

Part B: Framework Summary summarises the how the Trust's education improvement and assurance activities are structured across triennial, annual, termly, and ongoing cycles.

Part C: Activities provides detailed descriptions of each activity within the framework, including school development planning, self-evaluation, reviews, and data reporting.

Appendix A: Education Scheme of Delegation clarifies which roles are accountable or responsible for different aspects of education development and assurance.

Appendix B: Education-Focused Policy Framework maps the key policies that underpin education quality across the Trust and identifies where decision-making and oversight sit.

Appendix C: CST Conceptual Model for Trust-led School Improvement provides a summary of the triple-helix framework that underpins the Trust's approach to designing, enabling, and evaluating sustainable school improvement at scale.

CONTENTS

PART A: POLICY

1.　PURPOSE

Our Strategy and Operating Model provides a clear framework for delivering high-quality education across all schools within the Girls' Learning Trust.

Our education mission is to empower girls to thrive through a holistic, rigorous and transformative education that nurtures their intellectual, emotional, and personal growth.

We believe in the limitless potential of our students. While each school is encouraged to shape its own educational vision—responsive to local context and the needs of its community—this is grounded in a shared commitment to:

1. The transformative power of girls-only education
2. The holistic measurement of success based on the whole student
3. The prioritisation of student wellbeing and character development
4. The promotion of girls' leadership rooted in strong values
5. The value of equity, diversity and inclusion

To realise this mission, we must strike the right balance between school-level innovation and a unified, Trust-wide approach to quality and development. The second enabler of our Strategy and Operating Model focuses on this:

A coherent system for education assurance and development
We will build on high expectations for teaching quality, curriculum design, and student outcomes across all our schools, supported by a clear and cohesive system that ensures continuous improvement. By leveraging the collective strength of the Trust, we will create a collaborative network where schools learn from each other, share best practices, and innovate together. Evidence-based insights, grounded in research, will guide our decision-making, educational practice, and innovation. Professional development for teachers and education support staff will be a continuous priority, ensuring they stay current with the latest approaches and benefit from the shared expertise within the Trust. A culture of intelligent accountability will empower schools to deliver the best education, ensuring that all students receive the support and opportunities they need to reach their potential.

The **Education Development and Assurance (EDA) Framework** provides a structured approach to ensuring high-quality education across the Trust. It sets out clear responsibilities for education development—focusing on continuous improvement, innovation, and best practice—and education assurance, which ensures compliance with quality standards, policies, and statutory requirements. This framework aims to:

- Establish a consistent approach to education development and assurance across all schools within the Trust.
- Define the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders, including the Trust Board, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Headteachers, and Local Governing Bodies (LGBs).
- Align with national education policies, statutory regulations, and sector best practices to maintain high standards of teaching, learning, and student outcomes.
- Foster a culture of continuous improvement, collaboration, and accountability.

By embedding this work, the Trust ensures that all schools within its remit benefit from both the autonomy to innovate and the oversight necessary to maintain excellence.

2. LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

The EDA Framework is informed by a range of statutory requirements, national policies, and best-practice guidance to ensure compliance and effectiveness. The key legislation and regulatory frameworks underpinning this framework include:

National Legislation and Regulations:
- Education Act 2002: sets out the legal framework for school governance, leadership, and responsibilities.
- Academies Act 2010: establishes the statutory requirements for academy trusts, including autonomy, accountability, and funding agreements.
- Children and Families Act 2014: outlines the provision for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
- Equality Act 2010: requires schools to ensure equality of opportunity and prevent discrimination.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE): provides statutory safeguarding guidance for schools and academies.
- Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF): sets the standards for school inspections and expectations for leadership, teaching quality, and student outcomes.

Trust-Specific Guidance and Policies:
- GLT Strategy and Operating Model: outlines the Trust's overarching educational vision, priorities, and objectives.
- GLT Governance Handbook: details the delegation of responsibilities between the Trust Board, CEO, Headteachers, and LGBs.
- GLT Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy: ensures compliance with statutory safeguarding requirements across all Trust schools.
- Professional Development Review Policies for both teaching and support staff.

By aligning with these legal and policy frameworks, the EDA Framework ensures that the Trust's approach to education development and assurance is both rigorous and compliant while fostering a culture of excellence, autonomy and accountability.

3. DEFINITIONS

When developing an effective framework for education development and assurance it is important to be clear what we mean by each concept. To put it simply, education development focuses on enhancing and elevating quality and outcomes, while education assurance focusses on the process for monitoring compliance with established benchmarks for consistent and reliable quality.

Education Development
Education development focuses on the continuous improvement and enhancement of the quality of teaching, learning, and student outcomes. Its primary aim is to make ongoing efforts to better educational practices, policies, and systems. This includes implementing innovative teaching methods and curricula, providing professional development for teachers and staff, analysing data to identify areas for enhancement, and developing and sharing best practices within and between schools. The approach should be proactive and forward-looking, emphasising growth and progress through iterative cycles of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting to achieve higher standards over time.

Education Assurance

Education assurance, on the other hand, is focused on monitoring and ensuring compliance with established regulations and benchmarks. Its main goal is to provide a consistent and reliable quality of education across institutions. Activities under education assurance include conducting audits and evaluations, monitoring compliance with accreditation standards and legal requirements, implementing quality assurance frameworks and processes, and collecting and analysing data to ensure Trust and school KPIs are met. It also involves providing oversight and accountability mechanisms to ensure that policies and procedures are followed. This approach is rooted in accountability, consistency, and reliability through systematic checks, reviews, and assessments to maintain and drive-up current standards.

A useful way to understand education assurance is through the three lines of defence model, which sets out a clear structure for how responsibility and oversight are distributed:

- First line (Headteachers and Local Governing Bodies): responsible for delivering high-quality education, identifying and managing risks, and ensuring day-to-day compliance within their schools.
- Second line (Chief Executive Officer and Trust Board): responsible for providing strategic oversight, setting policy and direction, and holding the first line to account through monitoring and performance management.
- Third line (independent audits and reviews): provide objective assurance that systems are working effectively, risks are well-managed, and statutory and regulatory expectations are being met.

Education Development	Education Assurance
Focuses on improvement, innovation, and the pursuit of excellence.	Focuses on compliance, consistency, and maintaining standards.
Driven by self-evaluation, professional development, and collaboration.	Delivered through reviews, data analysis, and governance monitoring.
Aims to build capacity and raise quality over time.	Aims to verify that current expectations are met and risks are managed.

It's important to note that these concepts are not mutually exclusive. In practice, many activities within a framework will draw on both approaches—using assurance processes to identify and inform development priorities, while embedding a culture of continuous improvement within the systems that provide oversight and accountability.

4. UNDERPINNING PRINCIPLES

Our approach to educational development and assurance is grounded in a clear understanding of how improvement happens at scale in a multi-school organisation. We recognise that strong trusts do not just monitor performance—they build capacity for sustainable improvement by leveraging shared knowledge, expertise, and alignment across their schools.

To support this, we adopt the Confederation of School Trusts' (CST) conceptual model of trust-led school improvement, which offers a shared language and structure to guide how trusts improve education. This model identifies three interdependent strands: (1) curate clear goals, (2) build capability and capacity, and (3) implement improvement initiatives — which form a continuous improvement cycle, not a fixed sequence. We use this model not to prescribe specific actions, but to provide a framework for ensuring that all improvement work across our Trust is:

- Purposeful, based on clear definitions of quality and strategic intent.

- People-focused, ensuring that expertise, leadership, and collaboration are central to improvement.
- Iterative and evidence-informed, allowing for real-time learning, adaptation, and de-implementation when necessary.

See Appendix C for a summary of this model.

There are six different principles that underpin the Trust's EDA framework:

i. An education mission rooted in a clear set of shared beliefs

Every school within the Trust is guided by a common purpose: transforming lives through girls' education, supported by a clear education mission statement. This has been co-created with stakeholders to ensure collective ownership. While the Trust provides strategic direction and coherence, individual schools maintain the flexibility to tailor their educational approaches to their unique communities. This balance ensures both alignment and innovation in pursuit of excellence.

ii. Autonomy with alignment and collective responsibility

Schools within the Trust operate with professional autonomy over curriculum design, teaching methods, and day-to-day decision-making. However, autonomy is underpinned by a clear accountability and KPI framework that measures student outcomes, progress, and experience. Schools are supported in setting ambitious goals, with shared accountability ensuring that innovation aligns with the Trust's overarching mission.

iii. Intelligent accountability that supports continuous improvement

The Trust fosters an environment where schools are encouraged to reflect, learn, and improve. High expectations are matched with meaningful support, including shared professional development, peer collaboration, and access to expert guidance. Schools are empowered to engage in self-evaluation, peer reviews, and external quality assurance, reinforcing a culture of continuous improvement.

iv. Evidence-led and insight-informed decision making

Decisions across the Trust are informed by a combination of robust data analysis and school insight. Schools are encouraged to use data not only to track performance but also to inform tailored interventions that address in-school variations. A strong focus on inclusion ensures that resources are allocated effectively to support all students, particularly those facing disadvantage.

v. Addressing in-school variation and driving improvement through school-to-school comparison

Our core priority is to reduce disparities within each school—ensuring that every student has equitable access to high-quality teaching, support, and opportunities. Each school is supported to identify and respond to internal variation in outcomes and provision, with a particular focus on inclusion and equity. At the same time, we harness the value of school-to-school comparison to challenge underperformance, celebrate strengths, and share effective practice across the Trust. By using comparative insight intelligently and collaboratively, we strengthen the collective capacity of our schools to learn from one another and raise standards for all students.

vi. A culture of collaboration and knowledge-sharing

Collaboration is at the heart of our approach. Schools, staff, and leaders actively share expertise, resources, and best practices across the Trust to enhance learning, teaching, and leadership. By working together, we strengthen each school's ability to innovate and improve while ensuring no school operates in isolation.

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This section should be read in conjunction with the relevant sections of the scheme of delegation contained in Appendix A.

Role	Education Development	Education Assurance
Headteacher	Responsible for leading and implementing education improvement activities, including developing the School Development Plan (SDP) and overseeing internal reviews.	Responsible for providing evidence and participating in assurance processes such as the Annual School Review (ASR), data dashboard reporting, and safeguarding compliance.
Senior Leadership Team (SLT)	Leads the delivery of curriculum, teaching and learning, and pastoral improvement strategies. Drives internal review cycles and identifies CPD priorities.	Supports the Headteacher in collating data, contributing to evaluations, and responding to recommendations arising from internal and external assurance activities.
Middle Leaders (Heads of Department, Year)	Leads subject- or phase-specific development work, contributes to internal reviews, and supports professional development across teams.	Participates in peer and cross-trust reviews, contributes to curriculum and assessment consistency, and ensures departmental alignment with statutory requirements.
Local Governing Body (LGB)	Holds the school to account for the quality and impact of development priorities set out in the SDP. Provides scrutiny and challenge around the school's educational provision.	Reviews termly reports on performance, safeguarding, and risk. Raises concerns with the CEO where risks are identified and ensures that school leadership acts on assurance findings.
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	Sets the strategic direction for education development across the Trust. Oversees the commissioning of external reviews, capacity building, and innovation initiatives.	Leads Trust-wide assurance activities including the Annual School Review process, data oversight, risk assessment, and governance reporting to the Trust Board.
Trust Board	Has ultimate accountability for the performance of all schools in the Trust. Provides strategic leadership to ensure the Trust's educational mission is realised. Monitors whether development priorities align with the Trust's strategic plan.	Holds the CEO to account for the quality and consistency of education provision. Scrutinises ASR outcomes, dashboard data, safeguarding compliance, and educational KPIs.
External Partners (e.g. EDP)	Supports school development by providing expert advice, coaching, and professional challenge aligned with Trust priorities.	Provides independent validation of self-evaluation, curriculum implementation, safeguarding practice, and school readiness for inspection. Contributes to strategic oversight.

PART B: FRAMEWORK SUMMARY

This section sets out the structure and core activities through which the Trust delivers education development and assurance. It establishes a coherent and cyclical model that integrates strategic planning, performance evaluation, peer collaboration, and governance oversight to secure excellence in all Trust schools. Each component of the framework plays a distinct role in either development (capacity building, innovation, and improvement) or assurance (monitoring, compliance, and accountability), with many activities contributing to both. The framework is not linear but continuous and interlinked.

Trust Strategy		The Education Mission defines the Trust's shared vision for girls' education. It sets out the core principles that underpin all school activity—academic ambition, personal development, wellbeing, leadership, and inclusion—while allowing each school to shape its own vision in line with local context. It provides a unifying foundation for planning, performance monitoring, and strategic decision-making at every level.	
		The education development and assurance framework brings together education improvement activities into a single, integrated model. It supports schools to evaluate practice, share expertise, and drive high standards in teaching, curriculum, and outcomes. The framework balances accountability and support, ensuring schools are both challenged and empowered to deliver excellent education for every student.	
Triennial	School Development Plan	The School Development Plan (SDP) is a strategic document developed every three years and refreshed annually, setting out the school's improvement priorities and initiatives. It aligns with the Trust's educational mission and is underpinned by rigorous self-evaluation and data analysis. The SDP is reviewed annually and formally approved by the CEO and the Local Governing Body to ensure sustained relevance and ambition.	D
Annual	School Self-Evaluation & Priority Setting	Each year, schools complete a detailed self-evaluation using a standard Ofsted-styled framework covering curriculum, teaching, outcomes, leadership, and inclusion. This also includes an evaluation of key data, including education results and relevant student, staff and parent surveys. This process supports honest reflection and generates a focused set of priorities for the year ahead. These priorities guide both school-level development and Trust-level planning, support, and challenge.	D
	Annual School Review (ASR)	The Annual School Review is led by the CEO and provides a structured opportunity to interrogate and validate the school's self-evaluation. It involves discussion of school performance, safeguarding, curriculum, and inclusion, and results in a concise report with key findings and recommendations. The ASR plays a central role in informing performance oversight, development planning, and leadership support.	A
	Headteacher & Staff Objective Setting	Headteacher performance objectives are set annually, informed by ASR findings, school priorities, and Trust strategy. Objectives are reviewed mid-year and at year-end to evaluate progress, impact, and development	D/A

		needs. This process cascades through senior and middle leadership to ensure consistent alignment and collective ownership of improvement goals.	
Termly	Local Governing Body (LGB) Monitoring and Policy Review	Termly reports from the Headteacher provide the Local Governing Body with updates on performance, progress, and risk. LGBs are responsible for providing informed scrutiny, support, and challenge across key areas including attainment, behaviour, attendance, and safeguarding. Governors use this information to ensure local accountability and escalate concerns to the CEO where necessary.	A
	Trust Board Monitoring and Policy Review	Termly meetings of the Trust Board provide strategic oversight of education across all schools in the Trust. Trustees review performance data, safeguarding reports, and outcomes from school reviews to evaluate progress against the Trust's mission and strategic priorities. These meetings enable the Board to scrutinise the effectiveness of education policies, assess risks, and hold the CEO to account for the quality and consistency of provision across the Trust.	A
Ongoing	Internal Reviews (School-led)	Internal reviews are planned (on a risk-based approach) and delivered by school leadership teams to evaluate curriculum delivery, teaching quality, or inclusion. Activities may include learning walks, work scrutiny, data analysis, or feedback from staff and students, and are designed to test the impact of current strategies. These reviews promote professional reflection, develop middle leadership, and inform continuous improvement.	D
	Cross-Trust Reviews & Peer Collaboration	Schools participate in Trust-wide peer reviews to promote consistency, share effective practice, and build collective expertise. These may involve reciprocal subject reviews, joint professional development, or moderation of standards across schools. Cross-Trust collaboration ensures schools benefit from the strength of the group and avoids isolated practice.	D
	External Reviews (EDP-led)	Each academic year, the Trust commissions a programme of reviews aligned to Trust priorities and school needs. These may include school-specific reviews—for example, of teaching and learning in one particular phase, curriculum implementation, or leadership—and thematic Trust-wide reviews into key policy areas. Key report findings from the External Reviews are shared with LGBs and the Trust Board	D/A
	Link Governor Visits and Reports	Link Governors conduct focused visits on key areas (e.g. safeguarding, SEND, curriculum), meeting with staff and reviewing evidence. They provide written reports to the LGB, supporting triangulation of information and strengthening local oversight.	A
	Dashboard and Data Reporting Cycle	Each school contributes to a centralised dashboard reporting cycle that tracks key performance indicators including attainment, progress, attendance, exclusions, behaviour, and pupil experience. These dashboards are updated termly using Trust-wide templates and definitions to ensure consistency, comparability, and clarity. Data insights inform decision-making at all levels—supporting school improvement planning, enabling responsive interventions, and strengthening Trust-wide strategy and governance.	D/A

D – Education Development primary focus   A – Education Assurance primary focus

PART C: ACTIVITIES

1. SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

School Development Plan (SDP) Approval
Every three years, each school is required to produce a refreshed School Development Plan (SDP), setting out a medium-term roadmap for improvement and innovation. This plan articulates the school's strategic intent and outlines the key areas of focus across teaching and learning, curriculum development, leadership, inclusion, and student outcomes.

The SDP must:

- Align with the Trust's overarching educational vision and strategy.
- Be grounded in robust self-evaluation and performance data.
- Identify priority areas for improvement with clear, measurable success criteria.
- Provide clarity on how resources will be deployed, and impact will be monitored.

The SDP is formally reviewed and approved by the CEO and Local Governing Body. While the core plan operates on a three-year cycle, it is reviewed annually and adjusted as needed to respond to emerging challenges and opportunities. This planning process ensures that school improvement is purposeful, strategic, and aligned across the Trust, while allowing for local responsiveness.

2. ANNUAL ACTIVITIES

School Self-Evaluation and Priority Setting
Each school undertakes an annual self-evaluation process, using an Ofsted-aligned framework that reflects key areas of educational effectiveness. This self-assessment forms the foundation for internal planning, external challenge, and stakeholder accountability.

The self-evaluation addresses:

- The intent, implementation, and impact of the curriculum.
- The quality and consistency of teaching and learning.
- Student achievement, progress, and closing gaps for vulnerable groups.
- Behaviour, attitudes, and safeguarding culture.
- Leadership at all levels and capacity for sustained improvement.

The process is led by the Headteacher, with input from senior and middle leaders, governors, and (where appropriate) student and staff voice. Evaluations are expected to be evidence-based and honest — identifying both strengths and areas for improvement. The outcomes directly inform the annual school priorities, which are shared with the Trust to shape ongoing support and challenge.

Annual School Review (ASR)
The Annual School Review is a cornerstone of the Trust's assurance element of the model. Led by the CEO and senior Trust leaders (including Trustees), it is designed to validate the school's self-evaluation, understand its trajectory, and identify opportunities for deeper collaboration or intervention.

The ASR is typically a 120-minute process involving:

- Leadership conversations.
- Review of key documents (e.g. SDP, SEF, data dashboards).
- Scrutiny of curriculum implementation and outcomes.
- Consideration of safeguarding, wellbeing, and inclusion priorities.

The ASR is not an inspection, but a collaborative process aimed at supporting improvement. It results in a short written summary of findings, including commendations, key recommendations, and any follow-up actions. These reviews provide valuable insight to inform Trust Board reporting, Headteacher performance management, and shared learning across the Trust.

Headteacher and Staff Objective Setting
Objectives are agreed with each Headteacher (and other staff) as part of the annual professional development review cycle. These are designed to:

- Reflect whole-school priorities emerging from the ASR.
- Align with Trust-wide strategic goals.
- Be ambitious, achievable, and measurable.

Objectives are reviewed mid-year and at the end of the academic year. They form the basis for developmental support, professional growth, and—where appropriate—accountability and progression decisions. Senior and middle leaders across the school are also expected to set aligned objectives, creating a coherent focus for improvement at every level.

3. **TERMLY ACTIVITIES**

Local Governing Body (LGB) Monitoring and Policy Review
Each term, the Headteacher provides a detailed report to their Local Governing Body (LGB). This is an important mechanism for accountability at school level, enabling governors to monitor progress, challenge assumptions, and support school leadership.

Items for consideration typically include:

- Progress updates against School Development Plan priorities.
- Student performance data (including disadvantaged, SEND, and other vulnerable groups).
- Attendance, behaviour, and exclusion patterns.
- Safeguarding updates and risk management.
- Policy discussions and approvals.
- Spotlight and 'deep dive' reviews on complex subject matters

LGB meetings provide a forum for governors to ask questions, seek clarification, and provide constructive challenge. They may also commission "deep dive" sessions or participate in learning walks to deepen their understanding of the school's work. Any concerns or risks identified by the LGB are escalated to the CEO in line with the Trust's scheme of delegation.

Trust Board Monitoring and Policy Review
Each term, the CEO provides a detailed report to the Trust Board. This is a key mechanism for accountability at Trust level, enabling Trustees to evaluate performance, monitor risk, and provide strategic challenge to executive leaders.

Reports typically include:

- Summary outcomes from Annual School Reviews and key development priorities across the Trust.
- Trust-wide performance data, including trends in attainment, progress, attendance, and exclusions.
- Updates on safeguarding compliance, inclusion, and vulnerable groups.
- Identified risks and mitigation strategies across the education portfolio.
- Policy updates, approvals, and implementation monitoring.

Trust Board meetings provide a forum for Trustees to scrutinise the impact of the education mission, ensure statutory responsibilities are met, and hold the CEO to account for the quality and consistency of provision. Where necessary, the Board commissions additional reviews or requests further evidence to support its oversight and decision-making.

4. ONGOING ACTIVITIES

The Trust supports a rich and balanced system of continuous educational review, with three complementary forms of activity: internal reviews, external reviews, and cross-trust peer reviews. Each serves a distinct purpose:

- Internal reviews: led by the Headteacher and senior leadership team (SLT), focus on school-owned diagnosis, reflection, and improvement.
- Cross-Trust reviews: delivered in collaboration with peers across the Trust, support reciprocal learning and consistency of standards.
- External reviews: led by an Education Development Partner (EDP), provide expert validation, insight, and coaching.

The choice of review method depends on the context, purpose, and desired outcome. Internal reviews foster ownership and build evaluative capacity within schools. External reviews provide objective challenge and strategic support. Peer reviews help spread effective practice and drive trust-wide coherence.

Internal Reviews (School-Led)
Internal reviews are an essential part of each school's improvement cycle. Led by the Headteacher and SLT, these reviews are focused on self-directed inquiry, evaluation, and improvement planning. They enable schools to:

- Test the effectiveness of strategies set out in the School Development Plan.
- Deepen understanding of teaching and learning through subject or phase reviews.
- Diagnose emerging issues (e.g. gaps in provision, workload, consistency).
- Inform staff development priorities and the use of additional support.

Examples of internal review activities include:

- Leadership learning walks focused on curriculum implementation or pedagogy.
- In-school moderation of assessment or work scrutiny.
- Review of provision for specific pupil groups (e.g. EAL, SEND, Pupil Premium).
- Pupil voice and staff feedback surveys followed by action planning.

Schools are encouraged to build leadership capacity by involving middle leaders in planning and delivering these reviews or review activities. Key findings and actions from internal reviews are recorded and shared with the School Leadership Team, and where appropriate the Trust Executive Leadership Team, to inform wider assurance and development conversations.

Cross-Trust Reviews and Peer Collaboration

Peer review and collaboration are core to our identity as a trust. Every school in GLT participates in structured cross-trust review activities to promote learning, alignment, and the sharing of effective practice. These may include:

- Reciprocal subject or phase reviews between schools.
- Joint learning walks focused on identified priorities (e.g. curriculum sequencing, reading culture).
- Moderation activities to ensure consistency in assessment and standard-setting.
- Joint professional development sessions focused on themes such as SEND, behaviour, or leadership.

These reviews are centrally coordinated and linked to Trust priorities but led collaboratively by school leaders and staff. Participation is a key expectation of being part of the Trust. Through this process, schools benefit from receiving external insight and offering their expertise to others, reinforcing a culture where improvement is both collective and reciprocal.

External Reviews (Education Development Partner)

The Education Development Partner (EDP) plays a critical role in delivering targeted external reviews commissioned by the Trust to provide an expert, independent perspective on areas of strategic importance. These reviews form a key strand of the Trust's education assurance and development model—offering insight that validates school self-evaluation, informs leadership decisions, and strengthens trust-wide strategy.

The role of the EDP is threefold:

- To provide external validation of school self-evaluation and improvement priorities.
- To offer high-quality professional dialogue and coaching for senior and middle leaders during and after the review process.
- To contribute expert insight and analysis that strengthens the Trust's strategic decision-making and governance oversight.

Each academic year, the Trust commissions a programme of reviews aligned to priorities and school needs. These may include school-specific reviews—for example, of teaching and learning in one particular phase, curriculum implementation, or leadership—and thematic Trust-wide reviews into key policy areas.

The EDP will be an experienced senior education professional who works alongside school leaders to undertake fieldwork-based reviews. These reviews may include learning walks, student and staff voice, work scrutiny, documentation analysis, and structured professional dialogue. Reviews are conducted collaboratively and professionally, with a clear scope agreed in advance.

Following each visit, the EDP provides a concise report with:

- Independent evaluation of strengths and areas for development.
- Commentary on the effectiveness of current strategies.

- Professional recommendations for action, support, or further investigation.

These reports are provided to Local Governing Bodies and to Trust Board alongside relevant commentary from the Headteacher and/or CEO.

Link Governor Visits and Reports

Link Governor visits are an essential component of ongoing governance engagement and monitoring. Appointed to focus on specific areas such as safeguarding, SEND, Pupil Premium, or curriculum, Link Governors act as designated leads who liaise between the Local Governing Body (LGB) and school leaders.

Each Link Governor is expected to:

- Undertake termly or twice-yearly visits related to their focus area.
- Meet with relevant school leaders or staff (e.g. SENCO, DSL, Curriculum Leads).
- Review relevant documentation, including action plans, data, and policies.
- Engage in learning walks, pupil voice, or scrutiny of pupil work where appropriate.
- Report back to the full LGB with a short written summary, including areas of strength, areas for development, and any questions or actions.

These visits are not inspections, but supportive engagements designed to strengthen oversight, ensure governors are well-informed, and triangulate the information provided in Headteacher reports. Where concerns arise, Link Governors are expected to escalate these to the LGB Chair or CEO in accordance with the Trust's governance and escalation framework.

Dashboard and Data Reporting Cycle

Data dashboards are a core tool for enabling intelligent accountability across the Trust. Each school contributes to a central reporting cycle that captures timely, consistent, and comparable information on key indicators such as attainment, progress, attendance, behaviour, exclusions, and student experience. These dashboards are updated termly (and in some cases half-termly) and used by school leaders, the Trust Executive Leadership Team, Trustees and Governors to inform decision-making, monitor trends, and assess the impact of strategic actions.

The data reported is structured around Trust-agreed metrics, and where appropriate, disaggregated for key groups (e.g. Pupil Premium, SEND, EAL, high prior attainers). By standardising definitions and collection windows, the Trust ensures that schools can benchmark performance fairly and spot patterns early—whether for celebration, support, or further inquiry.

Dashboards are not simply compliance tools—they are designed to drive dialogue, enable shared understanding, and support a culture where data is used to empower action rather than police performance. School leaders use these insights to direct internal reviews, identify CPD needs, or prioritise targeted interventions. At Trust level, dashboard trends are used to inform resource allocation, strategy development, and cross-school collaboration.

APPENDIX A: EDUCATION AND STUDENTS SCHEME OF DELEGATION

The Trust Board holds ultimate **accountability** for educational outcomes across all schools. This scheme of delegation sets out which **responsibilities** are retained, delegated, or shared across different governance tiers. It ensures clarity, alignment, and collective responsibility in delivering the Trust's purpose and education mission.

Theme	Trust Board is responsible for:	LGB is responsible for:
Strategy, Policy and Plans	▪ Approving the strategy and operating model for the Trust, including the purpose and education mission. ▪ Ensuring that meaningful stakeholder engagement takes place across the Trust.	▪ Contributing to the development of the strategy and operating model for the Trust, with a particular focus on the education mission. ▪ Providing opportunities for parents, staff, students and local community to be able to engage with, and feedback to, the school
	▪ Ensuring school development plans are in place and are aligned with the Trust strategy.	▪ Approving the school's annual development plan (SDP) and ensuring it is in line with the Trust strategy.
	▪ Approving the Education Development and Assurance (EDA) Framework for the Trust. ▪ Approving all Trust-wide policies and monitoring their implementation.	▪ Managing and delivering elements of the EDA Framework, and monitoring school-level review activity. ▪ Ensuring all Trust-wide policies are enacted and approving local procedures where appropriate as per the Policy Register.
Monitoring School and Trust Performance	▪ Approving and monitoring Trust-wide Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and school performance targets. ▪ Ensuring sufficient expertise and resources within each LGB to undertake their enhanced school-level scrutiny role.	▪ Approving and monitoring school-level KPIs. ▪ Providing reports to Trust Board on school and Trust-level KPIs. ▪ Analysing school performance data to improve outcomes. ▪ Monitoring priority departments and tracking progress. ▪ Monitoring outcomes, progress and experience of vulnerable or underrepresented student groups (SEND, PP, Bursary).
Teaching and Learning	▪ Approving the education mission for the Trust and ensuring alignment with all schools. ▪ Ensuring that a broad, balanced, and ambitious education is delivered across the Trust, including compliance with statutory curriculum requirements.	▪ Implementing teaching and learning standards in line with Trust expectations. ▪ Approving the school curriculum and assessment model within statutory and Trust frameworks.

	- Approving Trust-wide policies related to teaching, learning, assessment, SEND, and Pupil Premium. - Monitoring the quality of education across the Trust, including the effectiveness of teaching, curriculum delivery, and educational equity.	- Monitoring the quality of teaching and its impact on student outcomes, including for vulnerable and underrepresented groups (e.g. SEND, Pupil Premium, Bursary). - Monitoring the effectiveness and impact of the school's CPD programme on teaching and learning. - Overseeing the school's self-evaluation processes and ensuring alignment with the School Development Plan. - Monitoring the delivery of the statutory RSHE curriculum and overseeing provision for personal development, wellbeing, and careers education (including the Gatsby Benchmarks).
Safeguarding	- Approving the Trust-wide Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and ensuring it complies with statutory guidance (e.g. Keeping Children Safe in Education). - Setting the strategic framework and procedures for safeguarding across all schools in the Trust. - Ensuring Trust-wide compliance with the Equality Act 2010 in relation to safeguarding, inclusion, and student welfare. - Monitoring outcomes and themes arising from safeguarding reports and Trust-wide audits. - Coordinating and reviewing the annual safeguarding audit across all schools. - Holding the Executive Leadership Team to account for the effective implementation of safeguarding across the Trust. Delegated to Trust HR - Ensuring safer recruitment procedures are in place across the Trust. - Managing the school and Trust-level Single Central Register.	- Ensuring local safeguarding procedures are applied consistently in line with the Trust-wide Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. - Approving all school-level policies related to safeguarding. - Monitoring the implementation of safeguarding practice at school-level, including training, reporting, and safer culture. - Appointing a named safeguarding link governor to liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and report to the LGB. - Receiving termly reports from the Headteacher or DSL on safeguarding incidents, concerns, and training. - Ensuring all governors undertake appropriate safeguarding training, including on statutory duties.
Student Behaviour and Welfare	- Setting Trust-wide expectations for behaviour, attendance, and student welfare through the strategy and operating model. - Approving and reviewing Trust-wide policies on behaviour, suspensions, permanent exclusions, and related procedures.	- Setting and monitoring behavioural expectations at school level, in line with the Trust's strategy and policies. - Approving the school's behaviour policy and ensuring it reflects the school's ethos and statutory requirements.

	▪ Ratifying the final stage of all exclusion processes, including appeals and review panels, in line with DfE statutory guidance. ▪ Monitoring Trust-wide trends in behaviour, attendance, and exclusions to ensure consistency and equity.	▪ Monitoring student attendance, behaviour, exclusions, and wellbeing data, including bullying and safeguarding culture. ▪ Overseeing early intervention strategies and ensuring appropriate support for students at risk of exclusion.
Self-Evaluation and Ofsted	▪ Ratifying post-Ofsted action plans and ensuring accountability for their implementation. ▪ Commissioning support and intervention where Ofsted reports require. ▪ Overseeing regular governance self-evaluation at both Board and LGB level, including external reviews where appropriate as per the EDA Framework. ▪ Ensuring outcomes from Ofsted inspections, peer reviews, and Trust quality assurance inform Trust-wide strategic planning. ▪ Monitoring the Trust's overall inspection profile and preparing for future inspection readiness.	▪ Agreeing school-level Ofsted action plans with the Headteacher and CEO following an inspection. ▪ Supporting inspection preparation, including contributing to governance documentation and meetings. ▪ Ensuring parents are appropriately informed about upcoming inspections and outcomes in a timely and clear manner. ▪ Conducting regular self-evaluation of LGB performance, including skills audits, attendance reviews, and training needs analysis. ▪ Providing constructive challenge and support to the Headteacher to ensure Ofsted readiness at all times.
Admissions	▪ Reviewing and approving the Admissions Policy for each school in the Trust, ensuring compliance with the School Admissions Code. ▪ Approving the arrangements for parental appeals and Sixth Form special consideration, as defined in the Admissions Policy. ▪ Monitoring Trust-wide student recruitment and admissions data to inform strategic planning and school place management.	▪ Ensuring that admissions arrangements are published at school level. ▪ Monitoring admissions trends and access within the school, and its impact on the education provision. ▪ Supporting outreach and communication with prospective students and families to ensure equitable access and clear understanding of the admissions process.

APPENDIX B: EDUCATION FOCUSED POLICY FRAMEWORK

NB. See the Governance Handbook for the full Policy Structure of the Trust.

Policy	Approval Committee	Lead Staff
Education and Students		
Admissions (S) (by school)	Admissions	CEO
Economic Disadvantage	Trust Board	CEO
Safeguarding & Child Protection (S)	Trust Board	CEO
SEND (S)	Trust Board	CEO
Student Attendance	Trust Board	CEO
Student Suspensions and Exclusions	Admissions	CEO
Finance		
Charges & Remissions (S)	Finance	CFO
Governance		
Complaints (S)	Governance, Audit & Risk	CEO
Risk Registers	Trust Board	ELT
Health and Safety		
Health and Safety (S)	Trust Board	CEO
Critical Incident Management Policy and Procedure (CIMPP)	Governance, Audit & Risk	CEO
Digital and IT		
Information Technology	Governance, Audit & Risk	CIO
Artificial Intelligence	Governance, Audit & Risk	CEO
School Based		
Anti-Bullying	Local Governing Body	Headteacher
Accessibility Plan	Local Governing Body	Headteacher
Career Policy Statement on Technical Provider access	Local Governing Body	Headteacher
Home School Agreement	Local Governing Body	Headteacher
Relationships, Sex and Health Education	Local Governing Body	Headteacher
Student Behaviour	Local Governing Body	Headteacher
Supporting students with medical conditions	Local Governing Body	Headteacher
Assessment and Reporting	Local Governing Body	Headteacher
Attendance	Local Governing Body	Headteacher
Emergency Evacuation / Lockdown Procedures	Local Governing Body	Headteacher
E Safety	Local Governing Body	Headteacher
First Aid Room Procedures	Local Governing Body	Headteacher

S – Statutory Policy

APPENDIX C: CST CONCEPTUAL MODEL FOR TRUST-LED SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

The CST conceptual model presents a high-level framework to help school trusts reflect on, design, and refine their approach to school improvement at scale. It is structured as a triple helix made up of three interconnected strands—each encompassing key components that collectively support effective, sustainable improvement across schools in a trust.

1. Curate Clear Goals
Clarify what high-quality education looks like and align strategies accordingly.

- Set Quality Goals: define what the trust values as effective practice and improvement aims.
- Align Strategy: ensure school-level priorities align with wider trust strategy and ambitions.
- Use Evidence: identify improvement actions based on research and contextual insight.
- Evaluate Insights: apply robust evaluative tools (e.g. data, peer review) to inform ongoing improvement.

2. Build Capability and Capacity
Create the organisational conditions that enable improvement to thrive.

- Develop Expertise: prioritise professional learning, subject knowledge, and leadership development.
- Empower Horizontal Improvement: enable improvement across schools, not just within them, using shared resources and knowledge.
- Connect: strengthen collaboration through networks and cross-trust communities of practice.
- Grow Culture and Leadership: shape values, behaviours and routines that support excellence and improvement.

3. Implement Improvement Initiatives
Drive change through iterative, evidence-informed action.

- Adopt a Cycle: use a structured process (e.g. Explore, Prepare, Deliver, Sustain) and behaviours (Engage, Unite, Reflect).
- Leverage Capacity: align expertise, time and resourcing with improvement objectives.
- Anticipate and Adapt: evaluate progress, learn from missteps, and iterate initiatives where needed.
- De-implement: identify and stop practices that are ineffective or low-impact to avoid initiative overload.

This model provides a common language and framework for trusts to design, share, and refine their improvement approaches, encouraging both vertical (school-specific) and horizontal (trust-wide) learning.