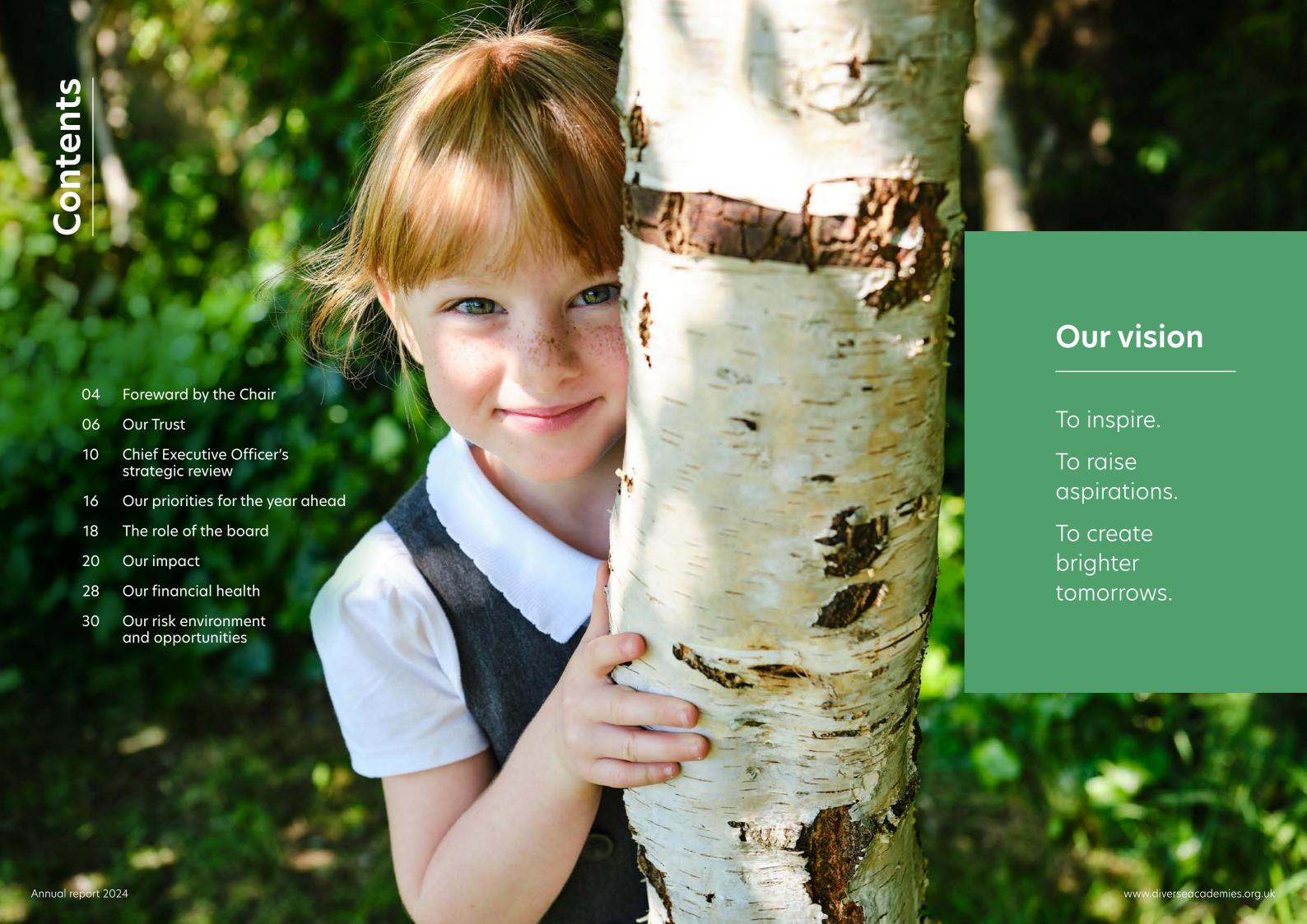
2024





A year of strength, growth and resilience

The past year has demonstrated our resilience and capacity for growth, driven by our commitment to inspire and support aspirations within our communities. Our progress continues to be rooted in strong governance and the dedication of our trustees and local academy committees, ensuring we stay true to our charitable purpose of advancing education for the public good.

Our mission is to nurture curiosity, promote wellbeing and empower young people. By aligning with best practices, we continue to enhance education quality, as confirmed by recent Ofsted inspections.

This year we marked key milestones, including completing developments at Samuel Barlow Primary Academy and launching work at Bracken Lane Primary Academy. At Samuel Barlow, we have transformed the original school building, optimising space and adding modern facilities to create an exceptional learning environment. At Bracken Lane, we have begun works to reconfigure spaces, extend the main hall and add new classrooms to provide more effective learning environments.

We have also faced challenges, most notably the severe flooding at Thrumpton Primary Academy. Yet, in adversity, our collective resilience shone through. High-quality alternative accommodation was quickly arranged, ensuring minimal disruption to learning while providing a safe and welcoming space. The academy's swift reopening, with an enhanced learning environment, just a few months later serves as a powerful testament to our ability to transform challenges into opportunities.

Growth has been another focal point, and our careful strategic planning has yielded noteworthy outcomes.

Two successful free school bids mean we will open new schools in 2025/26, further extending our reach and impact.

Meanwhile, we secured funding and commenced work to rebuild Yeoman Park Academy as a state-of-the-art special school, and moved forward with plans to rebuild The Holgate Academy.

We have also reinforced our approach to governance and, through regular performance benchmarking, we continue to develop sustainable, needs-driven strategies that will ensure our adaptability in the years to come. Combined with a strong approach to succession planning, including the appointment of David Schwarz as our chair of trustees from September 2024, we are well-equipped to face the future. His leadership, rooted in our values of empowerment, respect and care, will further deepen our commitment to innovation, inclusivity and sustainability.



Mike Quigley MBE Chair of Board (2023/24), Diverse Academies Trust

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Our investment in capital infrastructure is intended to be transformative – offering young people modern, vibrant learning spaces where they feel inspired, ready to learn and safe.









FOUNDED IN

2011

ACADEMIES

PRIMARY

Our mission

We nurture curiosity, develop wellbeing and empower children and young people to go beyond their aspirations. Together, we make a difference in our diverse communities and in the lives of those who learn with us and work with us.



TOGETHERNESS

CONNECTIVITY

COLLABORATION

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AND LINCOLNSHIRE

MORE THAN PUPILS

AGES 3-19

In some of the most socially deprived communities in the country

OVER STAFF MEMBERS ACROSS THE **TRUST**

CORE TO OUR FOUNDING PRINCIPLES

DIVERSE STAFF AND STUDENT COMMUNITIES SIGNIFICANT SITE

DEVELOPMENTS

ARK ACADEMY

New build underway
which will enable
us to take on more
students, in a
bespoke, modern
environment
designed with
special educational
needs and
disabilities in mind.







NEW ACADEMIES SET TO OPEN IN 2025/26





which will include forest-style learning







SAMUEL BARLOW

PRIMARY ACADEMY

New reception, hall and catering facilities

Our Trust









Work underway to include additional building capacity and an improved layout to better support the number of children in the academy.



As I reflect on the 2023/24 academic year, I am reminded of how far we have come at the midpoint of our strategic plan. This is not only a moment to celebrate our achievements but also an opportunity to sharpen our focus on what lies ahead. The progress we have made has positioned us well to continue building on our successes, ensuring transformative outcomes for the years to come.

Over the past academic year, we have made substantial progress towards our three strategic objectives. Through a commitment to excellence, collaboration and continuous improvement, we have built a strong basis for future growth and sustainability.

Our strategic objectives

- Develop a high-performing organisation which is agile and sustainable within an ever-changing global context.
- 2. Secure the best outcomes for all pupils and students, so they achieve their full potential academically and have the skills to be able to actively contribute to a global society.
- 3. Improve the integration, agility and flexibility of resource management to enable sustainable school improvement.

Driving improvement and enabling behaviours

At the core of our strategy is a robust improvement model – explore, prepare, deliver, sustain – inspired by the Education Endowment Foundation. By applying this model, we have identified key strengths while recognising areas for further growth. It has guided our planning and execution, producing lasting results across numerous initiatives. For example, our enhanced attendance systems have improved engagement and support, reducing persistent absence in secondary academies.

Equally important are the enabling behaviours we champion - engage, unite, reflect. These are not abstract ideals but actionable behaviours that underpin our daily operations. They have supported our efforts, such as Thrumpton Primary Academy's recovery after the devastating effects of flooding. The restoration of learning spaces was driven by colleagues across the Trust with incredible support from the local community, demonstrating the strength of the relationships we foster. Together, these behaviours drive a culture of teamwork that is fundamental to our success.



As we enter our second decade as a multi-academy trust, I am proud of how far we have come in building a vibrant and evolving culture across the organisation.



www.diverseacademies.org.uk



A unified approach to securing the best outcomes for all students

In tandem with improving attendance, we have reinforced academic rigour through more effective accountability measures. Significant strides have also been made in language and communication development, with initiatives like Launchpad for Literacy, which provides a structured approach to building children's literacy skills, and Voice 21, which embeds speaking and listening across the curriculum. Together, these initiatives have enriched our curriculum and played a crucial role in supporting student progress. We are committed to expanding their reach across the Trust to ensure their benefits are felt more broadly. Other notable projects, such as Walton Academy's Beatboxing Live event, streamed to over 120 schools, and Tuxford Academy's mental health awareness walk of 300,000 steps, further demonstrates how we unite and inspire our communities while promoting student wellbeing and engagement.

Mental health remains a priority area, reinforcing our safeguarding efforts and fostering an environment where every child can thrive both academically and personally. Collectively, this work has strengthened our focus on equity, helping to address achievement gaps and unlock student potential.

Developing our staff and enhancing operational excellence

Investing in our staff has been a cornerstone of our strategic priorities. By expanding professional learning opportunities and supporting career progression, we have enabled our people at every level to develop. In addition to an extensive programme for teaching and learning roles, we have also focused on the growth of school business professionals - aligning priorities, streamlining processes and optimising efficiency to deliver value for money. Effective communication and collaborative practices have played a vital role in fostering skill development and enhancing operational performance. Looking ahead, we aim to fully integrate these roles across every layer of the organisation, ensuring resource management is seamlessly aligned with our academic goals. This holistic approach drives continuous improvement and ensures we are fully prepared to meet future challenges.

Strengthening culture as we grow

As we enter our second decade as a multi-academy trust, I am proud of how far we have come in building a vibrant and evolving culture across the organisation. Our collective commitment to fostering curiosity, promoting wellbeing, and empowering children and young people to achieve beyond expectations remains a key driver of our success. This culture has facilitated impactful teamwork, driving excellence in both education and business support.

Recognition of our culture's strength comes from various achievements, including Ofsted's acknowledgement of progress at Hillocks Primary Academy and the sustained 'good' rating for Tuxford Primary. Achievements such as The Holgate Academy's Carer Friendly Quality Mark also illustrate our commitment to creating inclusive, opportunity-rich environments for all students. While we celebrate these successes, we understand that cultivating this culture is an ongoing effort that requires sustained investment and focus.





Staff induction survey 2024

exceeded my expectations.







FROM FLOODS TO FLOURISHING

AT THRUMPTON PRIMARY ACADEMY





















Financial strength and future sustainability

Equally vital is our financial strength, which provides the bedrock for our stability and ability to make investments even in challenging times. This resilience enables us to consistently fulfil our mission while pursuing opportunities for growth and improvement. Initiatives to reduce energy consumption and transition to more energy-efficient infrastructure also align closely with our environmental sustainability goals, reinforcing our commitment to responsible resource management.

In the future, diversifying our income base will be crucial for sustained financial stability, enabling us to deliver quality education, support disadvantaged students, and uphold equal opportunities. As we progress through our strategic plan, I am confident we will remain committed to providing transformative education. Through collaboration, reflection and innovation, we can shape brighter futures for our students and the communities we serve, prioritising their long-term success.



Staff love working at the school.
They are invested in the
Hillocks journey, and they are
determined for the school and
all its pupils to thrive.

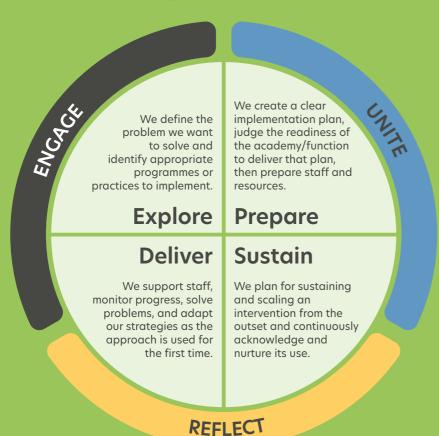
Hillocks Primary Academy, Ofsted report September 2023 We are committed to driving meaningful progress and building on the strong foundations we have established. With a clear sense of purpose and an ambitious outlook, we are focused on key objectives that will strengthen our organisation and deliver lasting impact across all areas.

Developing a high-performing organisation

To remain responsive and effective in an ever-changing global environment, we will:

- refine our improvement model by embedding the behaviours of engage, unite
 and reflect to drive effective implementation, while addressing contextual
 factors such as community deprivation, recruitment challenges and the needs
 of students with special educational needs and disabilities;
- strengthen our approach to professional learning, focusing on areas of need-based practice and advancing three core strands of initial teacher education, early career framework and continuing professional development;
- further develop governance structures to support our strategic goals and explore partnerships for external quality assurance and peer review; and
- implement our organisational growth plan to ensure we continue to evolve and meet future needs.

The 'golden thread' - four step school improvement model



Adapted from Education Endowment Foundation



Securing the best outcomes for all students

Every student deserves the opportunity to reach their full potential. To support their academic success and prepare them to thrive in a global society, we will:

- close attendance gaps to ensure more consistent engagement;
- strengthen academic rigour to improve outcomes for all students, with a particular focus on those with special educational needs and disabilities:
- reading at their chronological age and improve oracy to help students fully engage with the curriculum; and
- expand our post 16 curriculum offer, while working to ensure its long-term financial stability.

Embedding excellence in resource management

We recognise the vital role of school business professionals in enabling school improvement through effective resource management.

To maximise our impact, we will:

- establish a five-year approach to resource and pupil planning, including long-term people planning to ensure sustainability;
- introduce a new approach to people voice and engagement, ensuring staff feedback helps to shape decisions and direction; and
- develop a Trust-wide value proposition for staff, designed to enhance wellbeing, motivation and retention while ensuring value for money and maximised academic returns.

Following my appointment as chair of the board in September 2024, I would like to express my sincere thanks for the support I have received from my board colleagues. Having served as a trustee for five years, I can confidently say that the Trust is in robust health, thanks to the outstanding dedication of the staff and volunteers across Diverse Academies.

Our strengths are evident in many ways - a solid financial position, well-developed policies and procedures, positive Ofsted inspections, and, perhaps most importantly, the trust parents place in us to educate their children. We do not take this responsibility lightly, and it is one that I approach with a commitment to build upon.

Central to the role of the chair is to strengthen the board, ensuring it can best support the staff and leadership team in fulfilling our vision. This involves prioritising thoughtful trustee recruitment, making certain that we bring the right blend of expertise, experience and diverse backgrounds to provide strong direction and effective oversight. Equally, we must engage and inspire the next generation of volunteers, demonstrating not only the importance of being a trustee but also the personal satisfaction it brings.

The board has a collective responsibility to ensure that we remain focused on our charitable objectives, particularly providing high-quality education and improving life outcomes for every child. We do this by setting the strategic direction, holding leadership accountable, and meaningful engagement with the communities we serve.

Our accountability includes monitoring academic performance, ensuring financial sustainability, and adhering to regulatory and statutory obligations. By ensuring that resources are used efficiently and effectively, we create both educational excellence and a strong basis for future growth. Above all, our work must remain anchored in our shared vision, mission and values.

In the spirit of collaboration, I want us to always look outward, constantly exploring innovative solutions to the challenges we face and pursuing ideas that will drive success. A priority moving forward will be to continue building and maintaining robust connections with our local academy committees. These committees serve as essential conduits to the communities we serve, ensuring that the needs of those communities shape our decision-making and that the wellbeing of students remains at the heart of everything we do.

In all our efforts, it is crucial that we not only meet our legal and regulatory obligations, but also anticipate and prepare for future challenges. By drawing on the collective expertise and experience of the board, and working closely with the leadership team, we can navigate the road ahead with confidence and remain true to our mission - creating brighter futures for all the children and young people we serve.

The board has a collective responsibility to ensure that we remain focused on our charitable objectives, particularly providing high-quality education and improving life outcomes for every child.

David Schwarz

Trustee and Chair of Board (2024/25 onwards), Diverse Academies Trust



INVESTED IN OUR
SITES AND BUILDINGS
TO PROVIDE SAFE,
DYNAMIC LEARNING
SPACES FOR OUR
CHILDREN AND
YOUNG PEOPLE



£2.2M

invested in our classroom resources to ensure all of our students can access the benefits of modern technology and equipment



66%

of post 16 students across our academies went on to higher education degree courses 2/3

OF YEAR 11 STUDENTS ENTERED FURTHER EDUCATION

OF ALL OF OUR
YEAR 11 AND YEAR 13
STUDENTS OPTED FOR
APPRENTICESHIPS
AT AGES
16 AND 18



(M)

trips and visits
took place across
our six secondary
academies and
post 16 to enhance
the educational
experience and
broaden cultural
horizons

644

TRIPS & VISITS

TOOK PLACE ACROSS OUR EIGHT PRIMARY AND SPECIAL SETTINGS TO ENHANCE AND BROADEN CHILDREN'S OVERALL LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND DEVELOPMENT





OUR TRIPS & VISITS OFFER

Annual report 2024

Educational performance

Throughout 2023/24, our focus has been steadfastly committed to ensuring all that we do has a positive impact on each young person who learns with us, providing them with every possible opportunity to achieve to their highest potential.

Our academies have continued to foster excellence, ensuring every child not only thrives academically, but also socially and personally – across both our mainstream and special settings. In response to evolving challenges, we have adapted to the growing complexity of students' needs, particularly for those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). By prioritising mental health and wellbeing, we support students in engaging fully with their education.

To address shifting societal attitudes towards school attendance, we have implemented targeted strategies to improve engagement and promote consistent, in-person learning. While formal assessment outcomes largely align with national averages and remain a focus for improvement, we celebrate the broader progress made across our Trust. Adopting a holistic approach, we aim to equip every child with the tools to succeed both now and in the future.







Pupils benefit from an environment that is calm and suitable for learning.
Aspirations for what pupils can achieve are high.

The Holgate Academy, Ofsted report 2024





A comprehensive educational experience

Our broad and balanced curriculum extends beyond academic knowledge, equipping students with life skills to navigate a rapidly changing world. Enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular activities, it fosters well-rounded development, enabling students to embrace future opportunities and challenges. Together with families and communities, we provide environments where all children can thrive and build foundations for lifelong success.

Tackling attendance for greater opportunities

Recognising the impact of consistent attendance on learning and growth, we have strengthened tracking systems and introduced targeted interventions across our secondary academies to address persistent absence. Our primary and special academies have developed robust inclusion teams and introduced family advisors, who play a vital role in reducing barriers to attendance and fostering stronger community relationships. These measures reflect our commitment to supporting children and families holistically.

Enhancing educational quality and support

Improving the quality of education remains a core priority. Focused support for exam preparation, paired with enhanced behaviour standards, reflects our high expectations and dedication to fostering positive learning environments. With the rising number and complexity of SEND needs, we have ensured tailored support remains central to our approach. We have also refined our strategic planning for 2024/25 in response to national curriculum and assessment developments, maintaining a proactive, ambitious outlook to drive future success.

Celebrating achievements and collaboration

In 2023/24, Ofsted inspections highlighted the strength of our academies. Hillocks Primary Academy celebrated notable progress since joining the Trust, while The Holgate Academy demonstrated remarkable transformation. Tuxford Primary retained its 'good' rating, exemplifying our shared vision for quality education. Across the Trust, our students' successes – ranging from apprenticeships and higher education to independent living – demonstrate their resilience and readiness for the next stages of life. Whether in academic achievements or personal growth, we are proud to prepare students not just for exams but for life, equipping them to confidently embrace their futures.



People

Our commitment to creating a high-performing, agile organisation is demonstrated through our approach to people development.

Through the Diverse Association for Professional Learning, our programmes - including the renowned OLEVI initiatives - empower educators to enhance their skills and leadership, resulting in more effective teaching and improved student outcomes. In partnership with Redhill Teaching School Hub, we have also aligned our professional development with the evolving needs of education, enabling us to respond quickly and effectively to changes within the sector. And by prioritising the development of teaching, educational and business support staff, we have built a holistic framework that strengthens all areas of our organisation. We also host a hub school for Bamboozle - a programme of work co-funded by the Arts Council England specifically for teaching staff in special school settings.

Employee wellbeing is a key focus for us and, supported by our network of 'wellbeing champions', has contributed to creating a supportive and inclusive environment where staff can flourish, both personally and professionally. By regularly engaging staff through surveys and consultative committees, we have fostered a culture of continuous feedback and improvement, ensuring our people feel valued and invested in our collective success. Our emphasis on equity, professional growth and development has helped build a workforce that is not only adaptable but also motivated to drive long-term success.

11

Our emphasis on equity, professional growth and development has helped build a workforce that is not only adaptable but also motivated to drive long-term success.



Communities

We are proud of the meaningful impact our academies have on their local communities, with numerous examples showcasing their dedication and resilience. Through passion, collaboration and hard work, our academies strive to make a real difference in the lives of their students and communities, demonstrating the transformative power of education.

- At The Holgate Academy, the Carer Friendly Quality
 Mark was awarded by Nottinghamshire Carers'
 Association, recognising their exceptional support for
 students with carer responsibilities. This achievement
 highlighted the academy's compassionate ethos and its
 role in supporting young carers.
- Thrumpton Primary Academy's story of resilience is one
 of community strength. After devastating floods, the
 academy returned to its building within the year, thanks
 to teamwork across the Trust and vital community
 contributions. Parents, volunteers and local businesses
 united including West Burton Energy who helped restore
 the wildlife garden and Firbeck Construction Ltd who
 provided essential tools for repairs.
- Samuel Barlow Primary Academy opened a new building extension that has enhanced local facilities.
 And inspired by promoting young women's football, the Premier League also supported the academy by donating football kits with messages to foster inclusion and aspiration within the community.
- Wainwright Primary Academy children won a competition to design vibrant artwork for the discharge lounge at Kings Mill Hospital. Their creative effort now brightens the space, improving experiences for patients and visitors alike.
- Unity was demonstrated by Retford Oaks, Bracken Lane Primary and Thrumpton Primary academies, who joined forces to raise over £1,000 during a charity pyjama day for the Doncaster and Bassetlaw Teaching Hospitals' Emergency Village Appeal.
- Walton Academy hosted a Beatboxing Live event, streamed to over 120 schools, showcased inclusive education and highlighted their ability to inspire beyond the academy gates.
- Tuxford Academy's post 16 students walked 300,000 steps for the Young Minds charity, raising awareness for mental health.
- Queen Elizabeth's Academy reflected global impact, fundraising for Irindiro High School in Kenya to sponsor education for students in need while simultaneously collecting over 177kg of food for the local Sherwood Forest Foodbank.
- Finally, East Leake Academy's community connect events engaged 1,100 parents and fostered ties with local organisations, solidifying its role as a hub of connection and support.



Samuel Barlow Primary Academy



Wainwright Primary Academy



Walton Academy



Togetherness

Over the past year, togetherness has been a central driver of our success. Teams across our academies have collaborated closely, guided by our values of empowerment, respect and care. We have worked to ensure that resources have been used for the collective good, generating the greatest possible benefit for all students.









Our teaching teams and leaders have evolved and implemented toolkits designed to enhance curriculum development, address specific student needs and improve learning outcomes. These efforts have empowered us to respond to challenges while maintaining a long-term focus on improvement. We have also focused on refining our processes and procedures to boost efficiency and effectiveness. By streamlining operations, this has enabled us to maximise the use of our resources.

Externally, we have strengthened relationships with other strategic partners, including connecting with other multi-academy trusts, local authorities and sector specialists. These collaborations have expanded our impact, informed our thinking and helped us shape our role as civic leaders - going beyond our own sphere of working. As we look ahead, we will build on this year's successes, continuing to prioritise collaboration to drive meaningful impact across our Trust and the broader educational community.



Everyone is welcome at our school. Everyone is treated the same. We respect diversity.

Pupil comment to inspectors, Tuxford Primary Academy Ofsted report 2024

Sustainability

Over the past year, we have made significant progress in fostering environmental sustainability across the Trust. Forest schools have continued to be a key element in primary and special academies, with lessons focused on connecting students to the natural environment.

External educational visits and forums have also contributed to broader conversations around sustainability, enriching student engagement across all phases of education. Walton Academy showcased sustainability leadership during their community week by creating a thriving kitchen garden in collaboration with local businesses. This initiative taught students the importance of reducing food miles and promoting biodiversity. And East Leake Academy partnered with IKEA for an inspiring sustainability project, producing a short film to raise awareness about environmental issues and engage the wider community. These 'life lessons' provide students with a sense of purpose and responsibility, rounding them as citizens of the future and preparing them to tackle global challenges ahead.

In terms of infrastructure, heating units across our sites now operate at over 95% efficiency thanks to previous upgrades, and the consolidation of water suppliers is set to drive greater efficiencies and monitor usage closely.

The adoption of a unified digital strategy has advanced, with ongoing initiatives to reduce power consumption and ensure sustainability in technology management. Our efforts to streamline operations and supply chains have also led to a review of goods purchasing and supplier selection, with a particular emphasis on sustainability credentials. This included integrating sustainability measures into major tenders such as gas maintenance and ensuring compliance with upcoming public contract regulations.

Going forwards, we will continue to prioritise sustainability across our education and operational activities with a focus on continuing to reduce consumption, enhancing environmental education and incorporating sustainability into procurement processes - ensuring our ongoing work positively impacts on both the local community and the wider environment.



Despite market forces driving up costs, we continued to enjoy a strong and stable financial position in 2023/24, whilst ensuring our priorities remained resourced, and we had a healthy level of reserves.

Throughout the academic year, we have strengthened our already healthy financial position, despite the ongoing challenges of rising costs in supplies, services and salaries, which continue to outpace income growth. This strong position has been confirmed through external audits and consistent financial scrutiny.



Our financial strategies align with our broader objectives, vision, mission and values, focusing on sustainable financial planning, integrated curriculum financial planning and efficient resource management. At the core of everything is value for money and accountability, ensuring our financial commitments align with our ambitions for the young people who learn with us – decisions that support both improvement priorities and academic outcomes.

Our approach remains strategically managed, ensuring we maximise the impact of our investments in line with our mission. Resource usage is reviewed annually, with particular attention to curriculum design and staff deployment, supported by benchmarking and careful budgeting processes.

And despite the challenges, we have built on last year's strong position, with each academy achieving a surplus or break-even point, through prudent budget-setting and resource management.

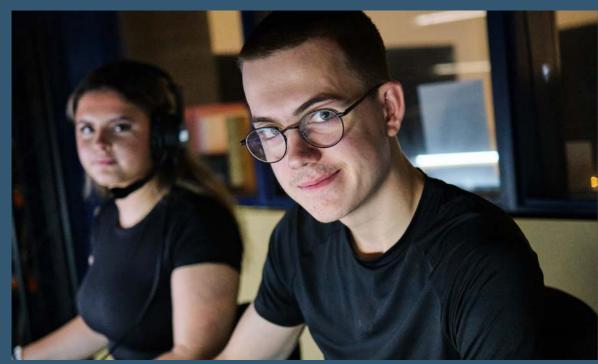
While sector-wide challenges persist, we are confident in our ability to navigate them. In the coming years, we will diversify our income streams to further strengthen our financial resilience and continue improving educational outcomes and narrowing the opportunity gap.



At the core of everything is value for money and accountability, ensuring our financial commitments align with our ambitions for the young people who learn with us.

Our risk environment and opportunities

In an ever-evolving landscape, the ability to effectively manage and embrace risk presents significant opportunities for progress and success. A well-managed risk environment, underpinned by strong internal controls and audits, safeguards our long-term vision and enhances our ability to capitalise on emerging opportunities.

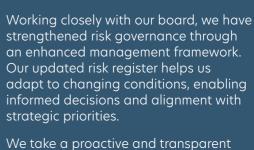


I have been highly impressed by how well the staff here are looked after and how kind and thoughtful everyone is.

Staff induction survey 2024







We take a proactive and transparent approach to managing internal and external risks, including funding fluctuations, staffing pressures, and energy market volatility. Each risk is carefully assessed, with mitigation strategies reviewed by our audit and risk committee. Regular internal audits further support evidence-based responses, contributing to strategic planning.

Risk management is embedded in our decision-making, ensuring we balance risks and opportunities while fostering resilience and continuous improvement. By integrating risk into our strategic approach, we remain prepared for change and committed to long-term success. Rather than seeing risk as a challenge to avoid, we view it as an opportunity to build a forward-thinking, innovative future while upholding our educational mission with integrity.





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