

Strategic Plan | 2024-2027

Strategic Plan 2024-2027



Strategic Plan | R2024-2027

Central Areas

-  Governance, Leadership & Sustainability of the Trust: (Synergy MAT) - CEO & The Board of Directors
-  The Financial Health of the Trust: (Synergy MAT) - CFO
-  The Quality of Education within our Schools: Primary: Deputy CEO Primary
-  The Quality of Education within our Schools: Secondary: Deputy CEO Secondary
-  The CPD Framework (Synergy MAT) – Professional Development Lead
-  The Quality of the Learning Environment & Infrastructure: IT Systems Manager(s)
-  The Quality of the Learning Environment & Infrastructure: Facilities Management – Trust Estates Manager
-  The People Strategy including the EDI Agenda: Director of People
-  GDPR Compliance: Director of People



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Central Area |

Governance Leadership & Sustainability of the Trust

Strategic Objectives by Summer 2027

-  *The expertise and skill set of the Trust Board oversee the strategic direction of the Trust effectively, and hold leaders to account.*
-  *Adopt an effective Trust leadership model, inspired by innovative vision and effective management, that enables the Trust to transform its educational provision to all-round excellence, underpinned by a robust financial position that maintains the Trust's control over its own decisions.*
-  *Sustain and develop an effective Governance System with a revised Scheme of Delegation & Trust Committees which support our stakeholder goals of improved outcomes, strong financial management and strategic success*
-  *Trust to have grown to 17 schools (2 additional primary schools) and at least one Alternative Provision Hub to meet the needs of learners across Key Stage 3 and 4 within Norfolk.*



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Central Area |

Governance Leadership & Sustainability of the Trust

Where are we now? Summer 2024

-  We have appointed a new Director (Trustees) with an educational management background, and are in the process of appointing one with a financial background, who works full-time as CFO of a Bio-technology Venture Capital Firm SR One
-  Succession, sustainability and the improvement of the educational model across primary and secondary phases has been strengthened with the appointment of a Primary and Secondary Deputy CEO to improve progress outcomes across our primary and secondary schools
-  The appointment of a Director of People (March 2024) has strengthened the Trust's Central Leadership model to bring strategy, coherence and consistency to our Human Resources model and ensure out-sourced HR provision meets the needs of a Trust with over 720+ employees
-  Flattened Secondary model of school leadership with the appointment of four Heads of School underpinning robust leadership at all levels, and a consistent leadership model
-  Recruitment is taking place for an experienced CFO who understands the educational landscape




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Central Area |

Governance Leadership & Sustainability of the Trust

Strategy

- Ensure that the Trust is a financial going concern with a robust financial recovery plan, where cost savings are made and school and Trust leaders are held accountable for financial spending
- Ensure that the Trust can recruit to significant leadership posts including, Members, Directors, LGC Chairs, Central Team Positions & Heads of School, SENCOs and Deputy Heads of School
- Ensure the Board provides the appropriate support for the continued growth and quality of Alternative Provision (Synergy & NCC Inclusion First Strategy)
- Mitigate the impact of future 'Requires Improvement' Ofsted judgements across Primary & Secondary phases through strong leadership from the Deputy CEOs and a through sustained implementation of improvement priorities outlined within the Schools' Improvement Plans
- Develop a growth strategy for the Trust, supported by robust due diligence.



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Central Area | **The Financial Health of the Trust**

Strategic Objectives by Summer 2027

Where should we be? Top-level Outcomes

-  *All the requirements of the Academy Trust Handbook (ATH) continue to be met and financial management across the Trust continues to be judged independently as at least good.*
-  *All available resources are used to improve educational provision and student outcomes, by ensuring contracts and value for money are regularly tested*
-  *Trust finances show reserves of between 4% and 7%*



Central Area | **The Financial Health of the Trust**

Where are we now Summer 2024?

-  *The Trust is working with an agreed partner Schools' Choice to deliver an accurate budget 2024-5 and three-year forecast which has been approved by the Trust Board and adheres to the requirements outlined by the ESFA re: BFR August 2024*
-  *The ESFA appointed SRMA has worked with the Trust to produce a robust recovery plan with clear cost-saving measures and financial KPIs*
-  *The Trust will have appointed a professional and experienced CFO to take up post in 2024-5*
-  *The Trust adheres to all the requirements outlined within the ATH – as confirmed by the external auditors and internal assurance visits.*
-  *The Trust has received substantial assurance on the basis of the internal assurance visits for the 2023-4 financial year.*
-  *The Trust has in place planned procurements to test value for money for existing contracts.*
-  *The Trust has fully implemented Integrated Curriculum Led Financial Planning (ICLFP) and has a three-year budget-planning cycle.*



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Central Area |

The Financial Health of the Trust

Strategy

-  *Meet the KPIs outlined within the ESFA's Recovery Plan in a timely and robust manner, achieving the agreed cost-savings for Year 1*
-  *Maintain the three-year budget planning cycle and rigorous ICLFP on an annual basis.*
-  *Ensure contracts and value for money are regularly tested.*
-  *Use these tools to ensure there are sufficient resources to deliver the required services and plan accordingly for falling rolls alongside growth within Alternative Provision*
-  *Review and approve, on an annual basis, the contribution to be made from reserves to the agreed strategic spending priorities for the Trust and update and monitor the Reserves Pooling Policy annually*
-  *Maximise income generation by fully utilising all our facilities*



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Central Area | Overall Effectiveness of Primary Phase Schools

Strategic Objectives by Summer 2027

-  *The quality of education in our primary schools, including EYFS, is judged by Ofsted or independent external review to be at least good and improving.*
-  *Key outcomes at primary (EYFS, Phonics, KS2) are at or above national for all schools*
-  *All schools deliver a broad, balanced and inclusive curriculum that is adapted to meet the needs of all learners*
-  *All teaching staff have a strong understanding of effective classroom practice based on proven research*
-  *All schools maintain consistent and effective safeguarding practices*
-  *Leaders across the primary phase are equipped and confident to challenge under performance in their settings*
-  *Schools have positive, mutually beneficial relationships with their local communities*



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Central Area | **Overall Effectiveness of Primary Phase Schools**

Where are we now Summer 2024?

- All primary phase settings currently judged good by Ofsted, some judgements more secure than others, no school is outstanding*
- Outcomes vary across the Trust. EYFS and Phonics are broadly in line or above national in most schools, but at KS2 7/11 schools below national in writing and 5/11 schools below national in maths.*
- Curriculum fundamentals are in place. However, inspection findings highlight the need to ensure the content is effectively adapted to meet the needs of the highest and lowest attainers*
- All schools use CPOMs to record all safeguarding concerns but approaches vary*
- Further work needs to be undertaken to ensure that leaders have the knowledge, understanding and confidence to challenge underperformance.*



Central Area |

Overall Effectiveness of Primary Phase Schools

Strategy

-  *Ensure that the Trust monitors closely all changes to the Ofsted inspection schedule and responds accordingly, using internal and external expertise to guide and advise at both school and Trust level*
-  *Instigate an overt focus on outcomes over the next three years: develop a relentless, no excuse culture to raise attainment through regular compliance meetings.*
-  *Develop the curriculum offer in each school through professional development (from Cornerstones, PTI, Wensum English Hub, White Rose, HfL), monitor progress and outcomes by prior attainment groups.*
-  *Quality assure schools' progress through Curriculum Audit/SIP visit work; continuous professional development is at the heart of what we do*
-  *All schools to carry out annual safeguarding self-evaluations, develop consistency in use of CPOMs across the MAT, external safeguarding audits commissioned when required*
-  *As part of the work on raising attainment, work with VNET consultants to train leaders in effective challenge, difficult conversations and impactful pupil progress meetings, and related HR processes*
-  *Develop leaders' knowledge, understanding and confidence to challenge underperformance.*



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Central Area | **Overall Effectiveness of Secondary Schools**

Strategic Objectives by Summer 2027

-  *All secondary schools are judged by Ofsted as at least Good and are improving*
-  *Instigate an overt focus on outcomes over the next three years: develop a relentless, no excuse culture to raise attainment through regular compliance meetings*
-  *All secondary schools have a rich, broad and ambitious curriculum that engages all students resulting in positive progress scores at the end of Key Stage 4*
-  *Secondary leadership teams work in partnership across the MAT, sharing good practice; coaching and developing teams*
-  *All Alternative Provision and Specialist Resource Bases are highly effective in supporting the young people they serve*
-  *All schools, including those with Sixth Forms, have cost effective staff structures to ensure long term financial sustainability*
-  *Schools have positive, mutually beneficial relationships with their local communities*



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Central Area | Overall Effectiveness of Secondary Schools

Where are we now Summer 2024?

-  *All secondary schools are judged as Good by Ofsted.*
-  *Our secondary provision includes four secondary schools, two sixth forms and one specialist resource base*
-  *In order to develop support, challenge and cohesive working, the Trust has appointed a Secondary Deputy CEO to develop partnership working and improve outcomes at secondary level. The post-holder starts officially on September 1st 2024*
-  *A flattened Head of School leadership structure across secondary schools will be in place from September 2024 to ensure all schools have a substantive leader 5 days a week and this will support rapid progression to meet ambitious targets and outcomes*
-  *Further work needs to be undertaken to ensure that leaders have the knowledge, understanding and confidence to challenge underperformance.*



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Central Area |

Overall Effectiveness of Secondary Schools

Strategy

- Develop highly effective partnerships, across secondary schools, through effective integration of practice and purpose*
- Regularly review and develop our curriculum to provide a rich, broad and ambitious offer which engages all students and results in progress above national standards*
- Ensure secondary schools within an Ofsted window 2024-5 remain Good at their next inspection*
- Grow secondary provision across the MAT through the addition of Alternative Provision and Specialist Resource Bases*
- Embed effective monitoring, reviewing and quality assurance processes, taking timely action to ensure continued improvement*
- Develop leaders' knowledge, understanding and confidence to challenge underperformance.*



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Central Area | Professional Development

Strategic Objectives by Summer 2027

-  *Basic Coaching is the Trust agreed coaching method – all schools have trained coaches within their staff to support and develop others.*
-  *PTI – Primary and Secondary embedded across the Trust for providing high quality subject specific CPD, enhancing curriculum delivery and content.*
-  *The number of apprenticeships undertaken within the MAT has increased year on year (Teaching and Support / New and Current Staff).*
-  *The Teaching Assistant Development Pathway will have been taken up by all schools – these staff are utilised appropriately to support high quality teaching and learning.*
-  *Our CPD package incorporates and includes those staff working in SRBs/ Alternative Provision.*



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Central Area | **Professional Development**

Where are we now Summer 2024?

-  *The Prince's Teaching Institute North Norfolk Primary Hub has been created, with a focus on subject specialist days to support teacher CPD and student outcomes.*
-  *The PD Lead is working in collaboration with Apprenticeships Norfolk and Norfolk County Council to promote educational apprenticeships (promotional case studies created).*
-  *Basic coaching has been agreed as the Trust model and Trust delivery is focussing on developing middle leaders as regular coaches.*
-  *Two primary schools trialled the Teaching Assistant Development Pathway (delivered by ATT) feedback and impact will be developed across the MAT.*
-  *Early Careers Teachers have an established CPD offer. Mentors and Induction Tutors are supported by the PD Lead, through termly meetings.*



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Central Area | Professional Development

Strategy

-  *An Apprenticeship recruitment strategy supports our talent pathway.*
-  *Maximise national links with other Trusts and Providers to ensure Synergy can engage with the highest quality Professional Development opportunities.*
-  *Generate additional income and expertise through external work/consultancy in Initial Teacher Training (NITE and SFSCITT)*
-  *Review and evaluate the Trust career progression pathways to reflect national changes and guidance.*
-  *Create an Alternative Provision CPD pathway for staff at all levels, working in this area.*
-  *Update all policies relating to workforce development in line with national and local guidance.*



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Central Area | **Estates Team**

Strategic Objectives by Summer 2027

-  *An automated system for managing PPM and compliance across the trust, incorporating a helpdesk for colleagues to report minor and major repair works required.*
-  *A robust training matrix for Caretakers to follow, with regular updates.*
-  *Embedded regular two-way communications between Estates and School leaders on premises matters.*
-  *Clear delegation of tasks between the Estates Team and Schools, including clear line management responsibilities of on-site Caretakers.*
-  *A mobile Caretaking team to provide cover and assistance for schools where required.*



Central Area | **Estates Team**

Where are we now Summer 2024?

-  *A manual system for managing PPM, compliance and budget monitoring of DFC and SCA.*
-  *A manual system in schools for recording minor repair works.*
-  *Caretakers have access to Microsoft apps for recording compliance tasks, although this is not being completed consistently.*
-  *Inconsistent skill level across the Caretaking teams.*
-  *Training available for Caretakers but completed inconsistently.*



Central Area | **Estates Team**

Strategy

-  Investigate and employ an automatic PPM system to the Trust, ensuring Site and Office teams are fully included in its roll-out.
-  Draft a training matrix which suits the requirements of the role, encompassing all elements of the Caretaking Code of Practice. Ensure there is a sufficient support plan for completion with all Site Staff.
-  Finalise, embed and communicate clear responsibilities between schools and the Trust Estates Team. Ensure consistency between sites and check understanding regularly.
-  Model different ways that a mobile caretaking team can be set-up, to include basic maintenance tasks and some regular contractual tasks, such as window cleaning. Ensure full training and equipment is costed and provided.
-  Effective performance management of caretakers.



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Central Area | IT Infrastructure

Strategic Objectives by Summer 2027

-  *The learning infrastructure in our schools, including the application of new technologies, enhances the learning experience of all students and ensures the safety of all users.*
-  *Trust ICT systems are up to date, secure and well maintained, and deliver the required services across the Trust.*
-  *ICT service provision (personnel and systems/hardware) meets the ICT needs of the Trust and adapts to new and emerging ICT requirements to facilitate teaching, learning and back-office support.*
-  *The learning environment is conducive to high standards of student learning.*
-  *All school resources are appropriately allocated to maximise student learning.*
-  *Ensure DFE Digital IT Infrastructure Standards are met across the Trust.*
-  *Ensure the resilience of core services, such as Internet access, is as good as financially feasible.*
-  *Key data for all Trust schools is current and available centrally to Governors and Senior leaders of the Trust.*
-  *Set up a Trust-wide group of staff to discuss IT provision, review policy and future development strategy for IT services.*



Central Area | IT Infrastructure

Where are we now Summer 2024?

- All schools will be part of the Synergy IT Network by September 2024. This will enable a more consistent IT experience to be delivered across all schools and enables data to be shared more easily.*
- Currently, many schools have outdated hardware which needs upgrading to ensure up-to-date software can be deployed to maintain the security of the network and the latest applications are available to staff and students.*
- Much of the current network infrastructure does not meet the recommendations of the DFE Digital Infrastructure Standards, so the performance of IT services is not consistent across all sites.*
- The Synergy network is proving very resilient and service availability is very high. However, there are still some single points of failure which could affect the availability of core services, such as Internet access.*
- All high schools are using Arbor as their management information platform to which all primary schools are planned to be added by the end of 2024. Arbor has a MAT site which allows key data to be captured from all schools and reported centrally.*



Central Area | IT Infrastructure

Strategy

-  5-year rolling IT upgrade plans are in progress for all schools. Hardware upgrade plans are in place to allow Windows 11 to be rolled out by the end of 2025 including ensuring hardware is available to all students when required.
-  Network infrastructure upgrades to meet the DFE Digital Infrastructure Standards will be phased in over the next 3 years as finances permit.
-  Backup broadband connections for all schools will be implemented to ensure additional resilience for key IT services.
-  Online safeguarding monitoring will be enhanced as required to meet the additional requirements of KCSIE.
-  Network and data security will be enhanced to ensure the Trust's resilience to and recovery from possible Cyber attacks.



Central Area | **Human Resources**

Strategic Objectives by Summer 2027

-  Synergy MAT has a comprehensive HR function with clear policies and procedures relating to recruitment, employee relations, performance management, legal compliance and staff development.
-  Change management protocols including restructuring protocols are embedded across the Trust.
-  Job descriptions and pay-scales are consistent across the Trust, and TLRs are regularly reviewed; job descriptions are up to date and reviewed annually as part of the Performance Management Cycle..
-  To recruit and retain appropriately qualified and skilled staff and become an employer of choice.
-  EDI and well-being strategies are fully embedded increasing staff attendance, productivity and morale.



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Central Area | **Human Resources**

Where are we now Summer 2024?

-  *Director of People appointed March 2024*
-  *A variety of tariffs are used to negotiate Supply Rates with no consistent MAT approach,*
-  *Inconsistent application of employment policies*
-  *Consistent support from Schools' Choice, our outsourced HR provider*



Central Area | **Human Resources**

Strategy

-  To ensure performance management processes actively promote leadership development, cross Trust collaboration and succession.
-  To develop and embed an engagement and wellbeing strategy.
-  To develop and embed an Equalities, Diversity & Inclusion strategy.
-  Attract the best people through fair, rigorous and robust selection.
-  Ensure continuing development of leadership, personal and professional skills.
-  Recognise achievement through structured routes to progression, leadership development opportunities and rewarding through fair, transparent and appropriate remuneration frameworks.
-  Ensure a culture of fairness and inclusivity, where opportunities are available to all.
-  Provide an environment where health and wellbeing are actively promoted, where people feel engaged and valued for their contribution.
-  Upskill leaders in understanding and confidence to challenge underperformance.



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