

# Ensuring Excellence

An Excellent Trust School  
Reviewed 2026

## Ensuring Excellence 2023-2026

This document provides the benchmarks that describe an excellent Community Academies Trust School where the young people in our care leave with high standards of achievement.

Achievement in three main areas:

**Social:** They have developed and sustained excellent friendships and an ability to build mutual respect with others. They know how to behave and conduct themselves so that they are ready for the next stage in their lives.

**Academic:** They have developed intelligence and a broad range of knowledge and skills that equip them for the next stage in their lives.

**Personal:** They have personal attributes and talents that have been nurtured at school often beyond the day to day planned curriculum. They have pride and confidence in who they are and what they can achieve. They have developed essential character virtues and a crucial sense of possibility.

And for our staff:

All members of our staff community see themselves as learners. They are empowered to make decisions, be creative and to lead. Mutual respect pervades all relationships, working together to enhance professional growth and the consequent achievements of the young people in our care. All staff have clarity and certainty about the direction our school and trust are taking and be working on only a few initiatives at any one time with a sense of how their work is contributing to that vision. Staff co-operate with each other and are not in competition with each other - they are part of a team that ensures our schools are among the best in the country.

	An Aligned Trust Approach	This will be a success if...
We all work so that pupils understand and believe in <b>The Power of Education</b> - <i>instilling a 'crucial sense of possibility', making sure they value education and are motivated to achieve.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trust teacher Toolkit and Playbook</li> <li>"You Matter, We Care"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pupils are engrossed in their learning because lessons are stimulating and challenging.</li> <li>Pupils' efforts and personal achievements are deliberately and explicitly valued by staff</li> <li>Pupils are highly motivated to learn and succeed</li> <li>Pupils develop character virtues essential for success in life</li> <li>Pupils are resilient and can overcome barriers</li> <li>Pupils have fun as they learn and develop</li> <li>Pupils aspire to a rewarding career and work towards it.</li> <li>Pupils feel strong confidence and belief that they are valued by their school community.</li> <li>Pupils support and attend extra-curricular activities in large numbers because they value the additional opportunities offered to them.</li> <li>Parents believe in the potential of their children and value the opportunities that are offered to them in school</li> <li>Personal development and well-being reflects the criteria for "strong" standard in the Ofsted framework</li> </ul>
We all work so that we <b>live</b> and breathe <b>Inclusivity</b> - ensuring all pupils are valued as individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"You Matter, We Care"</li> <li>Trust Mental Health Minimum Offer</li> <li>Trust Attendance Strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pupils have or are on the way to achieving high self-esteem.</li> <li>Pupils learn from their experiences and overcome difficulties.</li> <li>All pupils are placed in something purposeful at the end of their school careers</li> <li>Pupils receive well-judged advice and guidance because all staff (support and teaching) have excellent relationships with them.</li> <li>Pupils are only excluded as a last resort to tackle behaviour that does not reflect leaders' high expectations and is in breach of the school's behaviour policy.</li> <li>Pupils feel supported in their choices and have access to a wide range of resources to inform their decisions</li> <li>There is equality of opportunity for all pupil groups including the most vulnerable (eg. SEND, those known to social care, disadvantaged, young carers, etc.)</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusion and Personal development and well-being reflect the criteria for “strong” standard in the Ofsted framework</li> <li>• Safeguarding is highly effective so that all children are safe.</li> </ul>
<p><b>We all give Our Professional Best</b> to ensure a consistent approach to leading and managing behaviour so that there are excellent relationships for learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trust Attendance Strategy</li> <li>• “You Matter, We Care”</li> <li>• Trust Mental Health Minimum Offer</li> <li>• Standardised approach to the Single Central Record</li> <li>• Standardised approach to suspensions and exclusions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Culture is exemplary - pupils are self-disciplined and resolve differences by looking at alternatives and making choices.</li> <li>• Attendance is consistently well above the national figure, and unauthorised absences are rare</li> <li>• Pupils arrive in good time for the start of our school day and for lessons.</li> <li>• Pupils are self-aware, and they have well-developed values, principles and beliefs which inform their perspectives on life.</li> <li>• Pupils cooperate very well with staff and other pupils.</li> <li>• Pupils challenge prejudice</li> <li>• Pupils’ conduct is exemplary; mutual respect prevails, and peer support is achieved.</li> <li>• Pupils play an active part in maintaining the exemplary culture.</li> <li>• Pupils are confident that incidents will be dealt with swiftly and fairly</li> <li>• Pupils demonstrate excellent learning behaviours</li> <li>• Staff model an exemplary culture having high expectations and high regard for every pupil</li> <li>• Attendance and behaviour reflect the criteria for “strong” standard in the Ofsted framework</li> </ul>
<p><b>Education - Ensuring excellence in teaching and the curriculum so that pupils progress lesson after lesson.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trust Teacher Toolkit and Playbook</li> <li>• Growing Great People</li> <li>• Standardised Assessment</li> <li>• Professional Networks</li> </ul>	<p>The curriculum and teaching are excellent and provide challenge, memorable opportunities, and a richness that go beyond the minimum.</p> <p>Curriculum and teaching reflect the criteria for “strong” standard in the Ofsted framework</p> <p>SCOPE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The curriculum has a coherent big picture plan</li> </ul> <p>COMPONENTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planned components are small enough so that all pupils can ultimately achieve ambitious end points</li> <li>• Pupils have secured the prior knowledge necessary to learn new curriculum topics</li> </ul> <p>SEQUENCIING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curriculum components are positioned to make subsequent learning possible within lesson sequences, topics, years, phases</li> </ul> <p>RIGOUR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils gain a deep knowledge of how a subject works and engage in and learn disciplinary practices</li> </ul> <p>MEMORY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crucial components are emphasised and repeated to ensure they are remembered long term</li> <li>• When pupils struggle, teachers check which prior knowledge components are missing.</li> </ul> <p>TEACHING DECISIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities do not result in working memory overload</li> <li>• Challenge is determined by curricular goals</li> <li>• The right pedagogies are chosen for the component to be taught well</li> <li>• Lessons are adapted effectively to meet the needs of all pupils</li> </ul> <p>ASSESSMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils who fall behind are identified within the lessons sequence, as are pupils who require greater challenge</li> <li>• Assessment allows for the accurate identification of missing knowledge and informs planning</li> <li>• In the lesson teachers check pupils understanding and respond in the moment.</li> </ul> <p>ACHIEVEMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All pupils make excellent progress through a challenging and well-planned curriculum</li> <li>• Pupils enjoy and appreciate their acquisition of new knowledge and skills.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Leadership - Ensuring leadership so that our trust is</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growing Great People/Early Career Teacher Entitlement/School Based Initial Teacher Training/Coaching</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership at all levels is dynamic and often inspirational.</li> <li>• A clear and aspirational vision for the future directs and guides staff and pupils and is supported by the wider community.</li> </ul>

<p>a place where we all grow professionally and that this impacts on pupils' educational progress and experience "a well led school is well led by many"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional learning</li> <li>• Engagement with Professional Networks</li> <li>• HR policies and practice</li> <li>• Single Central Record and safeguarding policies</li> <li>• Monitoring for impact</li> <li>• Learning Walks (lesson visits/pupil discussions/work scrutiny/leadership intent/case sampling)</li> <li>• The Ensuring Excellence Summary (EES)</li> <li>• Governance Charter</li> <li>• Financial Discipline through delegations and systems</li> <li>• Integrated curriculum led financial planning</li> <li>• Estates/H&amp;S/Legal/Compliance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvement planning and strategic thinking is ambitious with clarity about goals.</li> <li>• Staff across our school provides excellent teaching, learning and care for children and young people.</li> <li>• Professional growth is informed by school planning, valued by staff, impactful and ongoing.</li> <li>• Leaders set and model high standards and settle for nothing less</li> <li>• Leaders at every level are credible, optimistic and open to challenge</li> <li>• Leaders lead with "power and love" in equal measure*</li> <li>• An emotionally intelligent culture prevails</li> <li>• Leaders are ambitious for their colleagues and understand and support their long-term career aspirations</li> <li>• All statutory duties are carried out effectively</li> <li>• All staff are treated with dignity and respect</li> <li>• Leadership and governance reflect the criteria for "strong" standard in the Ofsted framework</li> </ul>
<p><b>Community Schooling - Schools as Anchor</b>          Institutions who play a significant role in their localities contributing to the greater social good</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communities Professional Network</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A relevant curriculum that accesses local resources, people and the geography resulting in pupils with a greater sense of citizenship and advocacy for their local community</li> <li>• Greater trust and mutual respect between school/pupils/families and wider community stakeholders.</li> <li>• A positive community identity centred around the resources our school provides to the community (library/sports/creative/educative)</li> <li>• Employment for local people and a source of support in their work</li> <li>• All local children attend their local school</li> <li>• Improved attendance and achievement including but not limited to the academic</li> <li>• Community advocacy for the school</li> <li>• Pupils from vulnerable groups and families hold school in high regard and succeed at school</li> <li>• Strong partnerships exist with parents and other local agencies, ensuring excellent provision for children and young people</li> <li>• Leadership and governance reflect the criteria for "strong" standard in the Ofsted framework</li> </ul>

**\*Power and Love - CAT Leadership culture:**

<p><b>Power:</b>          the drive to achieve one's purpose, to get the job done, to push things to a conclusion</p>	<p><b>Love:</b> the drive to connect things, to bring people together and to unify</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Driven</li> <li>○ Pacey</li> <li>○ Relentless</li> <li>○ Indomitable</li> <li>○ Challenging</li> <li>○ High Expectation</li> <li>○ Holding to account</li> <li>○ Assertiveness</li> <li>○ Confidence</li> <li>○ Determination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Kind</li> <li>○ Inclusive Collaborative</li> <li>○ Positive Relationships</li> <li>○ Valuing individuals</li> <li>○ Asking for help</li> <li>○ Empowering</li> <li>○ Compassion</li> <li>○ Humility</li> <li>○ Empathy</li> </ul>