



2023 -2025

Arden Multi-Academy Trust – Strategy

Our mission is to provide opportunities that enable every Child to have aspirations, vision, honesty, integrity and great pride in their achievement.

Our vision is to lead our schools to become beacons of excellence at the heart of their local community by delivering an exceptional education for local children through consistently inspirational and challenging teaching, exemplary standards, ethical governance and leadership, high quality pastoral care and aspirational goals.

Arden MAT is a supportive Community where young people thrive.

Approved

Introduction

This strategy document provides an overview of the Arden Multi-Academy Trust and its vision, aims and operation. It sets out the rationale for the Trust and the key drivers for school improvement across our schools, as well as setting out the future direction of the Trust.

In addition to this document, there is an annual Trust Operational Plan which defines the tasks, targets and milestones for the seven key areas of focus for the Trust, monitors the progress of the Trust at an operational level and in our key areas of school improvement.

Linking to the Trust Operational Plan, each Trust academy also has its own School Development Plan and Self-Evaluation Document that reflect the priorities for the academy as agreed with the Local Governing Body, Associate Headteacher and the CEO/Executive Headteacher. This document is reviewed termly and updated.

Our seven key areas of focus are:

- Leadership and Management
- Outcomes for pupils - Standards of Achievement and Progress
- Teaching, Learning and Assessment
- Personal Development, Pastoral Care, Behaviour and Safeguarding
- Community and Parental Engagement
- Effective Management and Trust Services
- Governance and Quality Assurance

What is the Arden Multi-Academy Trust?

Our Trust brings schools together into one organisation so that school leaders, teachers, support staff, learners and our community can work and thrive together, gaining from and supporting each other.

As a local Multi-Academy Trust operating from our base at Arden Academy in Knowle, Solihull, the Arden Multi-Academy Trust (AMAT) was incorporated in April 2015 following approvals by the DfE; we are delighted to be an academy sponsor.

Our approach is built around a clear vision of inclusive education and a relentless drive to raise standards - we keep our focus on our learners, ensuring they are supported by great teachers, outstanding leaders and excellent facilities.

We believe in strong local management and governance. Our Trust is led by our Members and our outstanding Board of Trustees; each academy has a Local Governing Body to oversee progress in that school. The Trust Executive function is designed to be lean and focused, providing unwavering attention on getting the best outcomes for our learners, staff and the wider community.

We focus on research and evidence-led school improvement strategies; we develop our leaders and staff and ensure we have excellent and leading practice in our teaching, support and management practices.

Our support and management functions are wholly focused on supporting our schools, with exemplary financial management, excellent human resource support and a continuous drive for value for money, efficiency and effectiveness.

Our vision is to lead our schools to be beacons of excellence at the heart of their local community by delivering an exceptional education for local children through consistently inspirational and challenging teaching, exemplary standards, ethical governance and leadership, high quality pastoral care and aspirational goals.

Arden MAT is a supportive community where young people thrive.



Our mission is to provide opportunities that enable every child to have aspirations, vision, honesty, integrity and great pride in their achievement.

We achieve this through

- Ensuring excellent teaching, positive relationships and enjoyment every day
- Enabling all students and children to be successful learners who feel safe and happy
- Supporting the emotional health and well-being of all members of the Trust - including staff, students, children and parents
- Encouraging all students and children to have the highest expectations for their education and their future careers
- Providing an environment where everybody behaves with integrity
- Encouraging self-confidence, responsibility and positive self-image
- Supporting students and children to be ready to leave our schools with the skills, attributes and character to be independent lifelong learners who will embrace change and enhance society
- Providing opportunities and a learning environment which encourages students, children and staff to be fit and healthy
- Challenging any type of prejudice-based discrimination

To achieve this mission, we are building our Trust with an outstanding local, regional and national reputation.



Why our Trust exists

Our Trust exists because we have a commitment and passion for providing great schools for our communities. We consider that a locally-led and accountable Trust provides the best outcomes for learners and our communities, supporting schools with challenges and ensuring the best schools become even better.

Our aspirations are solely to support and improve our schools. We will consider associate arrangements with schools that meet our aims and would benefit from such an arrangement and will support other forms of provision where there are clear benefits for all parties.

Across all our schools and community, we provide strategic direction; support; specialist expertise; shared development and services focused on local needs. This is increasingly important at a time when the traditional Local Authority role is diminishing, resources and funding are severely constrained and support services are hard to access.

We are convinced of the importance of and value of local schools working closely together and have designed our Trust to do just that.

We have a sound model in place and our school's benefit from opportunities to work and learn together with the expertise that brings into the Trust.

Our Trust also sponsors schools and has already demonstrated how effective leadership from the Trust has helped improve schools through direct challenge and support and by working closely with fellow schools.

We are proud of our successes and the high level of interest from schools wishing to join us. As well as our support and services, we also look to bring in new developments and opportunities to advance our school improvement plans.



The scope of our Trust

Our involvement currently extends across the secondary and primary age ranges where we deliver, influence and support provision at all stages. We currently directly lead and support four secondary schools and two primary schools. We have a clear growth strategy which will see both Secondary and Primary Schools joining the Trust over the next two years.

We aim to support schools that are high performing as well as those moving from (Ofsted) categories. Schools facing challenges and those looking for new arrangements to improve are welcome to see what we offer and if we can help.

We work closely with a wide range of stakeholders at strategic and operational levels; this includes collaborative and formal partnership arrangements with key partners (e.g., the Local Authority and other local post 16 provision).

Our Aims

Our aim is for all young people to achieve the high aspirations that we have for them. Within the Trust we provide educational practice delivering distinct and unrivalled schooling to our communities which are benefiting from our unique and tailored approach. Education is at the heart of all we do - our aim is simple: “Excellence in Education”. We aim to develop brave, independent, emotionally intelligent people who will embrace and enhance tomorrow’s society.

The Trust will

- prepare each pupil to get the very best out of their lives
- provide a suitable environment and create an atmosphere for achievement
- enable pupils to find enjoyment in learning through doing
- engender community spirit and our place in the global world
- ensure each individual acts responsibly and is valued equally



The Trust believes

- all pupils have the right to learn and achieve uninterrupted by others
- all pupils have the right to be able to take risks with their learning in happy and secure academies
- all members of our community will co-operate with others and will be polite, considerate and honest
- all members of our community will accept that rights come with personal responsibilities
- all members of our community will expect high standards of behaviour and promote an understanding of the difference between right and wrong
- all pupils have the right to have their progress monitored and be provided with regular constructive feedback and the setting of challenging but realistic future targets

Our Structure

We have in place a clear and accountable model of governance at all levels that meets all legal and best practice expectations and demonstrates robust and transparent arrangements for leading our Trust and schools. Our model:

- Ensures we have **strong capability and capacity** within our Governance structures and staff appointed to the Trust
- Retains a clear model of **accountability and delegated governance**, holding the CEO, the Executive Headteacher and key operational officers to account so the Trust runs efficiently and effectively
- Maintains **knowledge and expertise** on system improvement and outcomes for learners of all ages and settings, applying sound Quality Assurance practices
- Demonstrates a clear understanding of Trust Budgets and meeting responsibilities for **budget controls and accounting** procedures across the Trust with sound risk assessment procedures in place



- Has a commitment to **continuous and appropriate self-review** and training of our Members and Trustees to ensure they fulfil their key functions
- Ensures LGBs and schools within the Trust are **fit for purpose with essential skill sets** for Governors, which meet clear schemes of delegation and can focus on the core business of education
- Leads and **develops the Trust** so it grows and becomes sustainable, has due diligence processes that are effective and ensures new schools joining the Trust are well supported and challenged
- **Protects the integrity and future** of the Trust including through regular self-review, succession and business planning



(i) Leadership of the Arden Multi-Academy Trust and Trust Board

We believe in excellent leadership. Martin Murphy was appointed as CEO in September 2018 and was Executive Principal of the Trust from September 2013. Martin was previously the Principal of Arden Secondary School and was a key driver in establishing the local Multi-Academy Trust (MAT). Damian Burgess was appointed Executive Headteacher in September 2018 and was previously Headteacher at Park Hall Academy. Our new Director of Primary Education will take up post from September 2024.

The Trust meets at least 4 times a year and has 5 members and 11 Trustees with a wealth of experience in the school system and School Improvement, Legal, HR, Finance, Accounting and Governance as well as Trustees from the world of Business and Industry:

Members	Trustees	Trust Role
Dr Celia O'Donovan	Dr Celia O'Donovan	Chair of the Trust Board
Geoff Harley-Mason	Geoff Harley-Mason	
Tony Stonehewer	Wendy Jarema	Chair of Performance and Pay sub-committee
Val Thomas	Andrew Cole	Vice-Chair Chair of Business and Personnel Committee
Sue Ashton	Malcolm Allsopp	
	Martin Murphy	CEO/Accounting Officer
	Professor Andrew Devitt	
	Des Foxon	
	Andrea Gardner	
	Vacancy	
	Damian Burgess – Non voting	Executive Headteacher



(ii) Committee Structure

To manage the Trust effectively, the Board has two statutory committees; each has Terms of Reference and reports into the Trust Board.

<p>Business and Personnel Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is the key operational group of the Trust • Terms of reference are in place • The Committee reports formally to the Trustees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This committee has a sub-committee the Performance and Pay Committee (P&P) which oversees all matters related to pay and performance management 	<p><i>This Committee meets at least 4 times a year</i></p> <p><i>This Committee meets at least twice a year</i></p>	<p>Membership: Bill Bohanna P&P Celia O’Donovan (T) P&P Geoff Harley-Mason (T) P&P Wendy Jarema (T) Chair P&P Damian Burgess (Exec. Headteacher) Martin Murphy (CEO, T) Andrew Cole (Chair, T) Malcolm Allsopp (T) P&P Sue Westmacott (HIA – LGB) P&P</p> <p><i>T = Trustee</i></p>
--	--	---



<p>Audit and Risk Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Committee reports formally to the Trustees • This serves as a scrutiny Committee that ensures compliance with academy financial regulations • It maintains the Trust Risk register • Audit procedures and outcome are managed and reviewed • Terms of reference are in place 	<p><i>This Committee meets termly</i></p>	<p>Membership:</p> <p>Ian Mackay – Chair (LH – LGB Chair)</p> <p>Andrew Devitt (T)</p> <p>Andrea Gardner (T)</p> <p>Aftab Ahmed (PH – LGB)</p> <p>Des Foxon (T)</p> <p><i>T = Trustee</i></p>
---	---	--



(iii) AMAT – Key operational staff

The Trust is committed to ensuring that there is only a small core team of staff responsible for the day-to-day operation of the Trust. The demands upon and capacity of this core team will be monitored as the Trust expands and we review Trust services.

Name	Position	Key Functions
Martin Murphy	CEO	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leads the Trust• Leads on the strategic development of AMAT• Accountable for the Performance, Teaching and Learning and Standards across the Trust academies• Develops Trust Strategy & delivers the Operational Development Plan and management of the Trust• Leads the financial development and compliance of the Trust as Accounting Officer• Leads on Risk Mitigation, Resources, Facilities, Asset and Estate Management across the Trust• Oversight of Trust buildings, facilities and physical infrastructure• Researches future developments in national context• Oversees and monitors governance across the Trust• Ensures the growth and development of the Trust and ensure national visibility and presence of the Trust• Liaises with the DfE/ESFA and represents the AMAT• Liaises with the RSC and represents the AMAT

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountable to the Trust Board • Maintains an outward facing role with the local community in order to preserve and enhance the reputation of the MAT and its academies
Damian Burgess	Executive Headteacher	<p>Responsible for the educational outcomes and operational efficiency of all Trust academies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides key strategic and educational support to new schools joining the MAT • Provides strategic leadership to the schools in the Trust • Ensures the operational success of the schools • Responsibility for staffing/welfare/discipline in each school • Leads school improvement and Teaching and Learning across the Trust • Ensures all academies meet their safeguarding obligations • Co-ordination of collaboration and Teaching and Learning task forces across the Trust • Succession planning with the CEO within schools • Holds individual schools accountable • Quality assurance of schools

<p>Ros Ashe</p>	<p>Director of Primary Education</p>	<p>Responsible for the educational outcomes and operational efficiency of Trust Primary Schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides key strategic and educational support to new Primary schools joining the MAT • Provides strategic leadership to the Primary schools in the Trust • Ensures the operational success of the Primary schools • Responsibility for staffing/welfare/discipline in each Primary school • Leads Primary school improvement and Teaching and Learning across the Trust • Ensures all Primary schools meet their safeguarding obligations • Succession planning with the CEO within the Primary schools • Holds individual Primary schools accountable • Quality assurance of Primary schools
------------------------	---	--

Christine Austin	Chief Finance Officer - CFO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leads the finance team for the Trust and finance officers in the academies • Ensures compliance with financial regulations and Trust scheme of delegation • Works with CEO/ EH//Associate Headteachers on staffing, budget planning, forecasting for each academy • Works with the Trust accountants to prepare for audit and EFSA returns. • Involved in procurement of Trust services and contracts
Michele Bull	HR Manager and PA to the CEO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PA to the CEO • HR Manager and leads on HR administrative functions for the Trust • Updates Trust website and ensures compliance
Victoria Large	Governance Professional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports the Chair and Trustees • Provides secretarial and clerking support to the Trust Board and LGBs - distributes papers, attends and minutes Trust Board and LGB meetings and committees
<p>Other Central Team leaders: Alex Smith - Facilities Manager Ayanna Graham - Payroll Manager Youssef Hennous - Network Manager Angela Berry - Catering Manager Alex Burnard - Primary Business Manager</p>		



AMAT - Academies and brief context (September 2023)

Academy	Type of Academy Conversion date – joining AMAT	NOR	Age range	Ofsted Category Date of last inspection
Arden	Convertor 1 September 2010	1805	11–18	June 2022 Good
Park Hall	Sponsored 5 December 2013	1267	11-18	May 2023 Good
Lode Heath	Convertor 1 January 2018	1161	11-16	March 2019 Good
Henley in Arden	Convertor 1 April 2019	690	11-16	December 2022 Good
Dorridge Primary	Converter 1 September 2023	686	3 - 11	May 2023 Good
Coppice Academy	Converter 1 September 2023	266	7 – 11	June 2023 Good



Key Priorities and Principles of the Trust

The Trust has seven key areas of focus which drive the annual Trust Development Plan, inform individual School Development Plans (SDPs) in each academy and support external funding bids. This ensures consistent reporting and monitoring across the Trust.

Our key areas and expectations for success are detailed in the Operational Development Plan, but are summarised below:

- (i) Leadership and Management** - we drive continuous improvement of leadership, at all levels, within our academies, with the expectation of strongly “Good” with growing evidence of a high percentage of “Outstanding” leadership. CPD, retention, recruitment and succession planning programmes.
- (ii) Outcomes for pupils - Standards of Achievement and Progress** – we support and challenge our schools to focus on raising achievement for all our learners so that all key measures are rapidly improving to at least nationally expected standards with many schools achieving outstanding results, which are well above national standards. We also work to ensure the highest possible standards of education at Post-16 which is enhanced with enrichment activities and outstanding preparation for the next level of education or for the world of work.
- (iii) Teaching, Learning and Assessment** – we pay unrelenting attention to classroom practice and pedagogy to ensure teaching is strongly “Good” with many areas of “Outstanding practice” so that our learners can achieve and make excellent progress in our schools. The Quality of Teaching and Learning across the Trust must ensure our children overcome any barriers and access a rich well- balanced curriculum – our aim is to raise a love of learning through excellent teaching.



- (iv) Personal Development, Pastoral Care, Behaviour and Safeguarding** – we provide high standards of pastoral care and support of children and young people in all our schools so attendance and behaviour for learning is consistently “Good” or better with outstanding safeguarding practices. We must ensure our students will be safe, develop character and positive relationships enabling each individual to develop into strong independent adults. We demand the highest standards of behaviour across our Trust.
- (v) Community and Parental Engagement** – we develop our schools so that they are very popular, often oversubscribed and the first choice for parents in our community. Parents and the community have a clear understanding of and high satisfaction levels of the Trust and the significant role it has in improving the quality of education across our area.
- (vi) Effective Management and Trust Services** – we commit to ensuring the Trust is well led and managed, rigorously held to account by the Trust Board, with effective services for our schools which provide value for money. Budget targets are met each year and the Trust has the financial capacity to support school improvement using the Trust Development Fund.
- (vii) Governance and Quality Assurance** – we ensure high quality Governance across the Trust which requires that leaders are accountable, challenged and supported. The Trust has effective quality assurance processes in place and an annual programme of external reviews that affirm its effectiveness.

These priorities are the core pillars of our development work, evaluation and accountability systems. Our development plans drive these priorities and each school is evaluated and scrutinised by the Trust wide systems of Governance.



Accountability and empowerment to drive teaching standards and the highest outcomes are the AMAT's drivers. All quality assurance, self-evaluation through Associate Headteacher reports and scrutiny is focused on our central priorities. This relentless focus enables the Trust Executive, Trust Governance and LGBs to evaluate systematically the work and outcomes of leaders, all staff and pupils. Our aim is to empower relentless improvement through careful planning, decisive action and an overall drive to provide the best education and opportunity for all pupils in our care across the Trust.

Integrity

We demand the highest standards from our staff and students. Our ethos is based on relationships. We build relationships on each and every level based on integrity, honesty and these are the backbone of our Trust. When any of these fail, we are quick to take action and rectify the situation.



AMAT Strategic Development – h o w we manage the next steps

Growth - Our vision is to grow the Trust, over the next two years. We are very clear that any growth needs to be carefully planned to ensure our systems and processes are well embedded and there is sufficient capacity within the Trust to support all our schools. While we will consider schools from beyond our immediate locality, our priority is to build a strong, local Trust in the first instance. Any consideration of schools joining the Trust will be carefully managed with appropriate, manageable timescales and robust due diligence processes, as set out in our Growth Strategy.

Dorridge Primary School, a main feeder into Arden Academy, joined the Trust in September 2023 along with Coppice Academy, a main feeder school for Lode Heath. In order to support excellence in the primary phase, the Trust will establish a Primary Department led by the Director of Primary Education, with phase specific leads across all the areas of school improvement in primary.

The recently published Solihull Local Plan has seen the adoption of the Arden 2020 vision: with the Arden Triangle establishing a new Arden secondary school, a co-located primary school and some 600 housing units established within the Arden Triangle – a place for Learning, Living and Leisure. This exciting development will see Arden school relocated in state-of-the-art new premises.

Partnerships – The Trust already has significant partnerships in place with local and regional MATS; Teaching Schools; RSC; DfE, and the LA. We will continue to develop these and new partnerships to ensure we are an outward facing organisation with an outstanding network locally, regionally and nationally.

Leadership development and succession – We are committed to growing the leaders of tomorrow in our schools and providing the mechanism for staff to work creatively and innovatively. Recruitment and retention of staff is critical and



we will work hard to ensure our Trust is seen as a high-performing employer known also for identifying and developing potential leaders.

Alternative provision – There is a significant need across our Trust to research and pilot a better provision for young people who struggle to engage in school because their behaviour means they are at risk of permanent exclusion or those who have significant mental health issues which makes it almost impossible for them to engage in the school system. Both these groups are at risk of leaving school with poor qualifications; as potential NEETS, the Trust will look at planning and securing high quality alternatives for these students.

Funding – We are determined to ensure our schools and the Executive apply robust financial processes to get the best from available funds. We will also seek to support schools with additional funding to support new and innovative projects which enhance learning and drive-up standards. We will make every effort to successfully attract further investment in our schools.

Community and culture – We believe that our schools and the Trust have a critical role to play in our communities. We are exploring new and innovative opportunities for staff and learners to work together across the Trust. This work is in its early stages, however there are already plans to develop Trust student leaders, performances, sport, trips and curriculum enrichment across our schools over the next two years.

Contact details:

If you would like further information on the Arden Multi-Academy Trust please contact Martin Murphy, CEO by email or telephone:

Michele Bull mbull@arden.solihull.sch.uk or Telephone 01564 732613

