



Our Lady Help of Christians Catholic Academy Trust

School Development Strategy 2025/6

At Our Lady Help of Christians Catholic Academy Trust we are driven to develop our schools by our shared mission and the core principles that are embedded within it.

'To provide an inspirational, outstanding Catholic education for all the children and young people in our schools. Our ethos will be driven by shared values, which are lived each day, as we strive for excellence in all areas of our work and cherish every person in our care.'

Honourable Purpose: doing the right thing

Respect: treating others as you would like to be treated

Co-operation: working together

Compassion: wanting to help someone in need

Stewardship: looking after God's world for the future

Our development strategy is based on our vision and on a school's capacity to improve, with Canon Law (806 - 'schools being the best they can be') permeating through all areas of policy and practice. Our group of schools consistently work together; sharing good practice, celebrating excellence and providing support for others within and beyond our Trust. Collaboration utilising our strengths is the starting point for all school improvement and developments.

As a Trust, children are at the heart of all we do; we aim to support all our schools to provide the best possible outcomes and the Trust Development Strategy seeks to achieve this. The Trust recognises that there is much to celebrate in every school and looks to develop academies that are diverse and that reflect the communities they serve; individuality and creativity are celebrated.

There is a clear expectation that each School is judged good or outstanding as a result of inspection by Ofsted and the Diocese of Shrewsbury in the Denominational inspection. The aim of this document is also to set out the relationship between the Trust and all academies, in raising children and young people's achievement, through the partnership between school leaders, local governing bodies (LGB) and the Trust.

The overriding principle is that each school is responsible for the standards that children and young people achieve and that they should work together to address areas of development and share good practice. Crucially, the Headteacher is the most senior leader at each school charged with ensuring and driving continuous school development. They, with their leadership team and local governing body is the first line of continuous development resource accountable for securing year-on-year improvement to learning and faith outcomes for all pupils on the school's roll. As far as school continuous development is concerned, the Trust has a role to intervene formally when necessary. The Trust has the overall responsibility for the safety, health, well-being and achievement of all children and young people and therefore it has a responsibility to ensure all schools offer the highest quality of sufficient and appropriate education and keep all children and young people safe and healthy.

This document sets out how the Trust will risk assess and then categorise academies so that proportionate resources can be targeted to support and challenge those academies most in need of development and improvement. This is also important to ensure that our schools contribute to the development of effective system leaders. It also outlines the circumstances under which we may need to intervene formally in academies which are causing concern.

Our grading of each school will not be based solely on the school's last Ofsted inspection. At the end of each academic year, a categorisation (based on the phases below) will be decided by the CEO, director of education and the headteacher using a broad range of evidence and informed by the core entitlement offer*. This will then be subject to confirmation by the Board – which will then determine the level of support to be applied in the new academic year.

The Trust uses a four-stage model which has been adapted from the DfE Multi-Academy Trust publication, 'Good Practice Guidance and Expectations for Growth.' (see below **Figure 1). This model can be applied to teams, year groups, subjects and development areas, such as special educational needs and disabilities, just as well as they can be applied to whole schools. It can also be used by schools that are generally performing well but have identified areas of practice they want to improve.

In addition, the model is used as part of the due diligence process as the Trust grows.

**Figure 1

Focus	Key Features	Next Steps
<p>Stage 1: Repair</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urgent recovery and foundations • Addressing safeguarding, behaviour, attendance • Restoring trust in leadership • Building safe, inclusive environments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic systems (HR, finance, assessment) under review • Staff morale low; retention issues • Disconnected curriculum; low engagement • Leadership focused on operational recovery • Compliance over innovation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stabilise staffing and governance • Rapid audit of pupil needs and SEND provision • Clear short-term improvement priorities • Intensive coaching and external support
<p>Stage 2: Strengthen & Align</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening leadership and teaching • Aligning vision, curriculum, and pedagogy • Building consistency and culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved behaviour and attendance • Leadership is beginning to drive a shared vision • Curriculum is coherent and inclusive • Some staff-led innovation emerging • Professional development is intentional but varied 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish coaching routines • Enhance inclusive practices • Deepen use of data to inform teaching and interventions • Align staff performance goals with school priorities

<p>Stage 3: Embed & Innovate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embedding high-quality practice • Innovating for deeper learning and wellbeing • Strengthening staff leadership and collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong curriculum with local/global relevance • Evidence-informed pedagogy is embedded • Pupil voice and wellbeing at the heart of decisions • Early adoption of digital and AI tools • All staff lead action research and improvement projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systemise distributed leadership structures • Deepen collaboration across and beyond the Trust • Build strong parental and community partnerships • Implement environmental and sustainability goals
<p>Stage 4: Lead & Influence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustained excellence with system contribution • Equity, innovation, and global citizenship • Shaping the future of education and the Trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regarded as a beacon of excellence • School leads Trust wide, regionally or nationally on specific areas, for example AI in learning, wellbeing, climate curriculum • Staff retention is strong; leadership is talent-rich • Learners thrive academically, emotionally, and socially • Strong, reciprocal partnerships with other schools • School influences policy, research and Trust approaches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentor and support schools in earlier stages • Pilot new models of working for example, assessment, curriculum, or leadership • Publish and share innovation openly • Co-create with pupils, families, and the wider world

Within Our Lady Help of Christians Academy Trust this will take the following form:

CATEGORISATION CRITERIA			
CATEGORY	DESCRIPTOR	SOME LIKELY KEY FEATURES	ENGAGEMENT
REPAIR	<p>A school with significant issues and without the capacity to secure their own development</p> <p>School requires significant development, clarify roles and responsibilities, agree priorities, high visibility, insufficient capacity to improve without direct support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attainment and progress measures in a number of phases are below average and showing no signs of sustained improvement • No clear and sustained focus on school development • No evidence of sustained improvement or capacity • Morale and perception of school is low – high staff absence, falling pupil numbers • Need to improve rapidly within a given review period • Inaccurate and overly generous self-evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dependent on agreed need and priorities up to eighteen days of support • Nine QA visits • Nine SI visits • Visits and support from CEO, QA professional and system leaders for targeted SI initiatives • Agreed Trust employee (not CEO/QA) will coordinate and be the lead professional on engagement • Monthly progress meeting with Chief Executive Officer, senior leaders and Chair of Governors <p>Direct Intervention by Chief Executive Officer and/or Director of Education to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure effective senior leadership • Implement a robust and rigorous School Development Plan and monitoring and evaluation schedule • Ensure that leadership at all levels can bring about sustained improvement • Secure quality first teaching across the school using expertise from across the Trust and beyond if necessary • Rapidly raise standards of attainment and accelerate progress across the school

STRENGTHEN & ALIGN	<p>A school that is not yet able to provide support for other schools and would benefit from additional support in their own development journey</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates capacity to bring about development or sustain improvement in key areas but has some vulnerabilities in key focus areas for example: leadership capacity and stability, attendance, curriculum intent and implementation, provision and outcomes for SEN pupils and/or external attainment/progress outcomes • Attainment and progress measures, are inconsistent and/or below average in a number of phases • <i>Where effective provision is not in place within an agreed timescale, there will be a need for direction from the Chief Executive Officer</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twelve days of support • Six half termly QA visits • Six Half termly SI visits • Visits and support from CEO, QA professional and system leaders where agreed for targeted SI initiatives • Additional support provided as necessary (<i>for example, Lead Teacher support, additional support from Teaching & Learning Specialists</i>) • Full involvement in Partnership Meetings • External reviews if required including Governance, SEND and Pupil Premium • Support from other schools in or beyond the Trust to secure improvement • Half termly Progress Meetings with CEO

EMBED & INNOVATE	A school that has the capacity to support other schools in some key identified areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the capacity to bring about development in their own setting through a clear focus on what they need to achieve to become excellent • Provides some support to others within the Trust • Accurately self- evaluates and prioritises next steps for development • Attainment and progress measures are likely to be at least average and improving over time in all key phases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Six days of support • Three termly QA visits • Three termly SI visits • Visits and support from CEO, QA professional and system leaders where agreed for targeted SI initiatives • Full involvement in Termly Peer Learning Conversations and Partnership Meetings • Identified strengths in practice will be shared across and beyond the Trust • Attend subject and departmental networks, making contributions where strengths have been identified
LEAD & INFLUENCE	An excellent school with the capacity to further its own development and offer significant support in many areas to others in their improvement journey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shares best practice, committing to developing excellent teachers across the Trust and delivering school-to-school support within and outside the Trust • Continues to develop and grow their own effectiveness • Grows leaders at every level • Attainment and progress measures are likely to be consistently above average 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Six days of support • Three termly QA visits • Three termly SI visits • Visits and support from CEO, QA professional and system leaders if applicable for targeted SI initiatives • Full involvement in Termly Peer Learning Conversations and Partnership Meetings • Share best practice with other schools with a focus on - curriculum, quality of teaching and learning and leadership • Lead and facilitate subject and departmental networks • Share excellent expertise across the Trust and beyond

		or well above average in all phases	
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The following are expectations of all schools within the Trust

- Attend Headteachers strategy meetings enabling a school development network to share best practice, develop improvement programmes, discuss standards, plan staff training and learn from each other.
- Headteachers regularly visiting each other's schools, to learn from them and to observe best practice.
- Subject leader networks to share and develop best practice and moderation.
- Engage in primary school development programmes.
- EYFS network meetings to share best practice and moderation.
- Secondary collaboration and development between members of Senior Leadership Teams, Heads of Department and departments, to share best practice, share curricula, develop pedagogy and moderation.
- Utilising the experience of our all through school and organising cross-phase teacher meetings, to ensure that our pupils experience a seamless curriculum that is understood and developed by all.
- Support staff team meetings to share and develop best practice.
- Combined primary and secondary SENDCO networks to share and develop best practice.
- Trust wide CPD events, using best practice from Research School programmes.
- Access to PTI CPD and attend development days throughout the year.
- To enable above networks and meetings there is a commitment from schools to release staff across the Trust to facilitate joint practice and shared resources.
- Investment in training for all staff within our schools.

In addition there is a *Core Entitlement offer for all schools.

- Biannual school improvement reviews by CEO / Director of Education / and additional as required.
- Headteacher performance management including mentoring / coaching offer
- Regular 'challenge and support' meetings 1:1 Director of Education and headteacher (every half term) with a set agenda
- Headteacher networks
- Phase and department specific networks
- Enhanced brokered specialist support such as: Trust peer reviews, SEND support, EY support, LLE support, signposting, HR support, additional financial support, website audit
- SIP visits focusing on identified areas for improvement (at least four)
- DSL Supervision
- Data packs with QLA and comparisons
- Target setting strategy (secondary)
- Year 6 strategy (primary)