

**Education Village**  
Academy Trust



**Strategic**  
**Plan 2022**



# Introduction

Established in 2006, the Education Village Academy Trust (EVAT) is a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) made up of 5 academies and schools in the borough of Darlington:



**Haughton Academy** -  
a mainstream secondary school providing education to pupils aged 11 to 16 years



**Beaumont Hill Academy** -  
a specialist provider of education to children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities aged 2 to 19 years



**Springfield Academy** -  
a mainstream primary school providing education to pupils aged 4 to 11 years



**Gurney Pease Academy** -  
a mainstream provider of education to pupils aged 2 to 11 years



**Marchbank Free School** -  
a specialist provider of education to children with social, emotional and mental health difficulties aged 4 to 11 years

We provide education and support to over 1600 children and young people in Darlington and neighbouring areas, and our mix of mainstream and specialist provision across all phases is unique. We're an impactful Trust with extensive experience of improving schools and academies to achieve "good" Ofsted ratings.

# Background, vision, ethos and mission

**EVAT was founded on the principles of inclusivity, diversity and fairness, and today, those principles continue to be fundamental to our delivery of exceptional learning experiences.**

Our schools have diverse backgrounds and contexts, and they all serve different cohorts of pupils, some of whom are incredibly able and talented, and some of whom have very high levels of special needs. Being different and diverse is our strength, and it drives our success in improving provision across the Trust and beyond.

We use our diversity to blend and enrich the learning experiences we provide, share our learning environments, ideas and perspectives and work as one community and one team. We're proud that our children and young people are part of a truly inclusive Trust in which fairness in opportunity and acceptance of difference enhances their understanding of the world and prepares them for the future.

**Our vision is simple:**

**The Education Village Academy Trust is a place where learning has no limits**

Our mission is to deliver exceptional learning opportunities to all of our children and young people. We stretch aspirations and aim to inspire everyone who learns and works with us to reach high and achieve their potential.

*Our ethos is inclusive and child centred. We work to:*

- Create a nurturing and friendly atmosphere and provide an environment where everyone feels valued for who they are
- Bring out the best in every child and young person and meet the full range of their individual needs
- Provide different and unique experiences, challenges and activities
- Show tolerance and respect for each other
- Prepare our children and young people for lifelong learning
- Improve the life chances of every child and young person we serve

*Our priorities for the next five years are to:*

- Provide exceptional learning experiences and maximise outcomes for our children and young people
- Build an even stronger Trust – fit for the future, with firm financial foundations and scalable structures and systems
- Grow the Trust strategically and sustainably and with the core purpose of extending our reach to improve the educational outcomes and life chances of more children and young people in Darlington and beyond
- Be more aware of our impact on our natural environment and create a passion for its protection and sustainability in our pupils and staff; reduce our carbon footprint; and create more exciting spaces in which to learn and work





# Context

## When developing our strategic plan, we've considered the environment we're operating in:

- Post-pandemic, the education sector will continue to deal with the disruption to learning and impact on outcomes, social development and mental health caused by numerous lockdowns and other absences
- Additional funding has been provided to support catch up, support pay rises and deliver targeted training to the workforce, but costs continue to rise in relation to pay bills, energy and other resources
- The Government has published its plans to reform the school system in the White Paper: Opportunity for All; and the SEND and Alternative Provision (AP) Green Paper, which set out plans for ensuring a stronger and fairer school system that works for every child. The White Paper also makes clear the Government's intention that all schools will be part of a strong MAT by 2030
- Recruitment to the education sector increased during the pandemic. However, there are indications that an increasing number are starting to leave the sector, citing pressure due to workload, lack of job satisfaction and better opportunities in other industries
- Social awareness, community values and protection of the natural environment are becoming more important and requirements are increasing for schools to work with other agencies to educate children and young people on social responsibility and environmental sustainability
- Schools, academies and Trusts continue to play a crucial role in protecting children and young people from harm and educating them on the safeguarding dangers they may face inside and outside of school and the help they can get
- Technology and its role in enhancing teaching and learning are more prominent as employment opportunities change for young people and learning software and devices become more advanced
- The growth of MATs requires more sophisticated governance infrastructures to drive the integration of schools into new and existing structures and secure their continuous improvement

EVAT is well positioned to meet these challenges and capitalise on opportunities:

- The Trust has a strong school improvement offer, with a track record in driving transformation and improvement in schools and academies, as proven in our Ofsted ratings
- Our ethos is clear - our school system is inclusive, fair and works for every child. We're central to local community and we're well placed to work with key partners to embed community values and create a passion for the protection of the natural environment in our children and young people
- We are well practiced in directing resources and funding towards the pupils who need them the most. Our safeguarding approach is well embedded. We will continue to target pupils who need help to ensure they are not disadvantaged by time lost in the classroom due to Covid, and are supported to achieve their potential, build resilience and develop critical life and employment skills
- Our financial position is strong, and we have plans in place to manage rising costs to protect our long-term financial health, enabling us to invest more in continuously improving the teaching and learning experience
- EVAT is developing a people strategy, with a view to creating a unique people offer to attract, develop, retain and inspire talented staff members to make their career with the Trust
- We are modernising our technology across the Trust to reduce workload, increase efficiency, engage pupils and provide tools to support exceptional teaching and learning outcomes
- The Trust has a strong and ambitious Board of Trustees and Educational Standards Committees (ESCs), with a clear vision for the future of EVAT and a wide range of skills and expertise to help us realise that vision. Regular reviews of governance and its effectiveness are planned to underpin growth plans

# Our plan for 2027

**We have a bold vision for the future. By 2027, we aim to have achieved four ambitious objectives, which are to:**

- Create and deliver exceptional learning experiences for all
- Build a strong Trust – fit for the future
- Grow our Trust sustainably, strategically and with a moral purpose to extend our reach and to improve the educational outcomes and life chances of more children and young people in Darlington and beyond
- Have a positive impact on the natural environment and create a passion for its protection in our pupils and staff

**Objective 1: Create and deliver exceptional learning experiences** for our children and young people. Over the next five years we will:

- Develop and implement engaging curricula and pathways to unlock potential, maximise learning outcomes and equip our children and young people for the career and life they aspire to
- Consolidate our approach to transformative school improvement by establishing a Trust-wide School Improvement and Quality Assurance Framework, implementing a comprehensive CPD framework, delivering a full coaching programme to embed deliberate practice, and completing regular review and assessment of teaching methods and outcomes
- Enhance our use of data and use insight and intelligence to continuously improve the teaching and learning offer, support innovation in teaching practice, and secure the best possible outcomes

- Strengthen our communication and relationships with parents, carers and families to ensure our high standards and aspirations for our children and young people continue at home and in the community
- Bring all aspects of the Trust's approach to safeguarding into a single framework, to further embed our safeguarding culture and ensure a consistent and well-coordinated approach to practice
- Bring all aspects of the Trust's approach to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) into a single framework, to ensure a consistent and well-coordinated approach to practice

The key outcomes we aim to achieve by 2027 are:

- All EVAT schools are rated "good" or "outstanding" by Ofsted
- In mainstream secondary settings, improved Progress 8 scores to well above the national average and improved Attainment 8 scores to well above the national average
- Primary school children meet the expected standard in reading, writing and maths
- SEND pupils exceed expectations in line with their own learning pathways
- Our schools are operating at capacity in pupil numbers
- Destination data show more of our pupils move on to further and higher education, apprenticeships, and high-quality employment opportunities



# Our plan for 2027

**Objective 2: Build a strong Trust – fit for the future.** Over the next five years we will:

- Introduce new systems and technology to streamline the services we offer schools and academies and make our business support more efficient and even better value for money
- Partner with our schools and academies to promote outstanding financial and people management and ensure the Trust is financially stable and is maximising investment in learning
- Redesign our people offer to make sure it reflects wellbeing, reward and recognition and underpins our plans to attract, retain and nurture the best talent
- Roll out a Trust-wide technology renewal programme to: enhance teaching and learning; reduce inefficiency in processes and systems; and modernise business service functions
- Review and further modernise our governance infrastructure to align it with growth plans

The key outcomes we aim to achieve by 2027 are:

- EVAT is operating efficiently and is proactively managing:
  - Teacher deployment in line with the required curriculum
  - Use and costs of support staff
  - Non-staffing costs
  - The balance between income and costs
- Colleague satisfaction with working for and with the Trust is high; sickness absence rates are low; and retention rates are stable (in comparison with national averages)
- The implementation of new technology to promote efficiency by automating processes, enabling self-service, sharing important information and data quickly and easily and reducing duplication in systems
- Investment is increased in teaching and learning and the technology required to create exceptional learning experiences across the curricula
- EVAT's governance infrastructure is scalable and is strategically controlling the Trust's decision making, financial viability, risk management and mitigations, and regulatory responsibilities

**Objective 3: Grow our Trust sustainably, strategically and with purpose.** Over the next five years we will:

- Clarify what sets us apart as a Trust to schools and other Trusts who may be interested in joining EVAT
- Promote awareness of our ethos and approach and establish our reputation as being a Trust which can be relied upon to drive transformation and improvement, and achieve the best possible outcomes for learners
- Further develop relationships and networks with the community, other Trusts and academies, and regional/national organisations to raise our profile and awareness of our unique offer and enhance learning and development opportunities for learners
- Align our values, identify risks to our ambitions and develop a plan and framework to guide potential collaborations, support working at pace and ensure we make informed decisions about growth
- Access funding opportunities to grow the Trust and boost our long-term capacity to grow

The key outcomes we aim to achieve by 2027 are:

- The Trust has grown to include 10+ schools (or to serve 7,000+ pupils)
- EVAT is influencing local, regional and national decision making and is part of major sub-regional, regional and national bodies and groups, contributing to policy making and strategic planning
- The Trust uses its strong relationship with its communities and local public and private sector organisations to enhance its curricula and create exciting learning and work opportunities for pupils and young people
- The Trust is routinely accessing a range of significant funding opportunities to enhance its capacity to grow and support other schools, academies and trusts to improve their provision to good and outcomes for learners



# Our plan for 2027

**Objective 4: Have a positive impact on the natural environment and create a passion for its protection and sustainability in our pupils and staff.** Over the next five years we will:

- Be sector leaders in contributing to environmental sustainability and tackling climate change
- Actively engage our children and young people in improving and protecting our natural environment and making it more sustainable for the future through new learning and work experience opportunities
- Reduce our carbon footprint by adapting our buildings and introducing renewable energy and smart technology solutions
- Embed environmental sustainability impact assessments into our procurement processes to ensure we are responsible and conscious of the effect we have on the environment when we buy resources, provide food, manage our waste and use energy

The key outcomes we aim to achieve by 2027 are:

- The Trust has achieved a national "Climate Leaders Award"
- Progress has been made in delivering against the DfE's ambitions for sustainability and climate change, including incorporating learning about the natural environment and sustainability into our curricula and CPD programmes and connecting work experience opportunities to green careers
- We have adapted our buildings to include more renewable energy solutions, thus reducing energy costs, emissions and the Trust's carbon footprint
- More recyclable and renewable materials are used across the Trust, reducing landfill, and food waste is minimised with a concentration on a field-to-plate supply chain
- Greater focus on added social value in contracts means the Trust can demonstrate its purchasing power is improving environmental sustainability, reducing the carbon footprint and emissions, and creating opportunities in the green economy



# Enablers to delivery

A thriving MAT means we can do more for our children, young people and the communities we work with. To realise our ambitions, we have identified four critical enablers to our strategy:



## People:

We will continue to be an exciting and innovative place to work and we will develop and provide an offer to our people to attract, nurture and retain the best talent, enabling our staff to work to their full potential and maximise outcomes for learners.



## Identity and brand:

We have a proven track record in successfully improving schools and academies. Raising awareness of our success and our unique offer is essential in achieving our growth ambitions. We will refresh our current brand and strengthen our relationships with key partners and local and regional partnerships to extend our influence over local and national policy making.



## Financial sustainability:

By building our financial strength we will be better positioned to deliver exceptional learning experiences.

We will continue to implement our plans to reduce inefficiency in our costs, systems, processes and organisational structures. This includes ensuring better value for money; and routine implementation of Integrated Curriculum and Financial Planning (ICFP) practices to ensure we provide the best possible curricula and make the best use of our resources.

We will also introduce new, leading-edge technology to enhance teaching and learning; reduce the number of systems in use across the Trust; and, where possible, we will automate our business processes to reduce duplication and save money for reinvestment into learning.



## Estates and sustainability:

The Trust's estate supports all aspects of our education provision. It is essential that our physical learning environment facilitates creativity and engagement between pupils and staff. We will work with our key partners to design innovative, sustainable learning spaces that meet the changing requirements of education policy, the needs of our children and young people and respect the natural environment.



# Strategic risks

Strategic risks to the achievement of our objectives have been identified as part of the strategic planning process and are reflected in the actions we plan to undertake and the strategic enablers we will implement. Strategic risks to our plans include:

Strategic risk	Mitigation
<b>People:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retention</li> <li>Wellbeing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quality people offer and workforce strategy to attract, retain and nurture the best talent and ensure wellbeing</li> <li>Introduction of new people management systems</li> <li>New technology to reduce workload</li> </ul>
<b>Financial capacity:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rising costs</li> <li>Inefficiency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementation of a Trust-wide finance improvement plan</li> <li>Implementation of ICFP</li> <li>New technology to reduce duplication in systems</li> <li>Proactive financial management through real-time systems and business partnering</li> </ul>
<b>Technology:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Infrastructure</li> <li>New devices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outsourced managed IT service in place</li> <li>Roll out of new infrastructure and devices across the Trust</li> <li>New systems for finance, people management and payroll</li> </ul>
<b>Estates management:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carbon footprint</li> <li>PFI restrictions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Estates management and improvement plan</li> <li>Funding for estates development and sustainability</li> <li>Effective Trust-wide health and safety management</li> </ul>
<b>Safeguarding:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trust-wide approach to safeguarding and centralised leadership of safeguarding policies, practices and processes</li> </ul>

Progress with managing and mitigating strategic risks will continue to be regularly monitored by the Trust's Board of Trustees.





# Measuring success

**We will monitor our progress against our strategic objectives and the key outcomes we expect to have achieved by 2027. We will regularly check our performance in relation to:**

- Educational attainment and progress
- Pupil numbers, attendance and exclusion
- Parent and staff satisfaction
- The efficiency of our curricula
- Financial management – including the provision and analysis of monthly management accounts; pay levels; investment in academy improvement activities; and the health of the medium-term financial plan
- People metrics including turnover, sickness, performance and succession planning
- Estate and health and safety management including short, medium and long-term investment plans; funding availability; and health and safety issues and trends
- Performance against the Trust's safeguarding policies and processes
- Addition of schools and academies to the Trust

# Education Village Academy Trust



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