

Embedding
our culture through
collaboration

Introduction

TDET is a highly successful Multi Academy Trust (MAT) and charitable organisation that aims to positively affect the life chances of our learners by being one of the **leading MATs in the country**, dedicated to providing a **truly world class education** for our communities in Peterborough and the surrounding area.

We are a Trust that unites and empowers like-minded academies to achieve the very best for our learners and at the heart of our vision is a profound belief that the Trust as a whole is more than the sum of its parts; this additional value is our **Trust Dividend**. All our academies are equally valued and contribute to the development and direction of the Trust as we grow together.

We firmly believe that the purpose of a Trust is to add more value than the sum of the parts.

It is this profound belief that leads to the culture - simply defined as '**the TDET Way**' - that we are embedding throughout our organisation, both within and across our academies; one that is rooted in the basis of collaboration. We exist as one organisation sited across multiple campuses but with an understanding that we are stronger together which drives our behaviours and working practices.

Of course, collaboration is not limited to staff nor solely within TDET but the principles and content of this document can be used for developing collaborative practices with and between our learners and beyond TDET.



Collaboration underpinned by shared values

All members of our Trust - our academies, members of staff, learners and communities - are united in our purpose and we share a set of common values and expectations which shape and drive our behaviours and form the basis of our collaborations:



Our honest and supportive approach creates mutual respect and **TRUST**.



We are open and curious in order to embrace **DIVERSITY** and learn from one another.



EXCELLENCE is achieved by being outward looking and developing best practice.



We achieve **TRANSFORMATION** by working together to make a positive impact.



Alone we can
do so little;
together we can
do so much.

~ Helen Keller



Why is collaboration important?

We understand that we exist to ensure that more pupils get a better educational experience by being part of TDET than they would in a stand-alone school. We firmly believe that effective and impactful collaborative practices can enable our learners to achieve improved outcomes by:



Improving the **quality of teaching and learning** through developing and sharing expertise, practice and resources. This will also incorporate and encourage the development of new and innovative ways of working.



Allowing **opportunities for professional development** by upskilling staff through sharing expertise and learning from others. Working alongside others enables staff to experience different perspectives and experiences, play to existing strengths and support areas for development.



Being outward looking can support the **development of new ideas** and alternative solutions to common challenges; the coming together of people with different and possibly diverse perspectives to co-construct new and/or different practices enables a successful approach to problem solving.



Working together as one large **Faculty of Education**, the creation of teams and networks can provide support and reassurance enabling an environment where staff get to know each other. Collaborating on tasks can create a sense of shared responsibility and accountability in turn helping to build confidence and enable staff to feel valued through the fostering of a positive environment.



Sharing existing resources and co-constructing new resources **saves time and reduces workload**. It can also lead to a more **aligned or consistent approach** which can be beneficial for a range of reasons when working across teams or academies; for example, a commonality of language (codification) and efficiencies when gathering or analysing data.



Providing the opportunity and ability to **influence practice** within an academy and within and beyond the Trust, supports staff to feel valued and enhances staff satisfaction and engagement.



Providing learners with access to a wider range of resources and opportunities.



Providing access to **stronger leadership, support** and development through our network of experienced and impactful professionals, helping academies to improve provision for all learners.







Offering **greater financial stability** by pooling resources across academies, which can help to improve financial strength and resilience. We can pool resources to purchase shared services, such as IT support, catering, and cleaning which in turn can help to reduce costs and improve efficiency.




When to collaborate

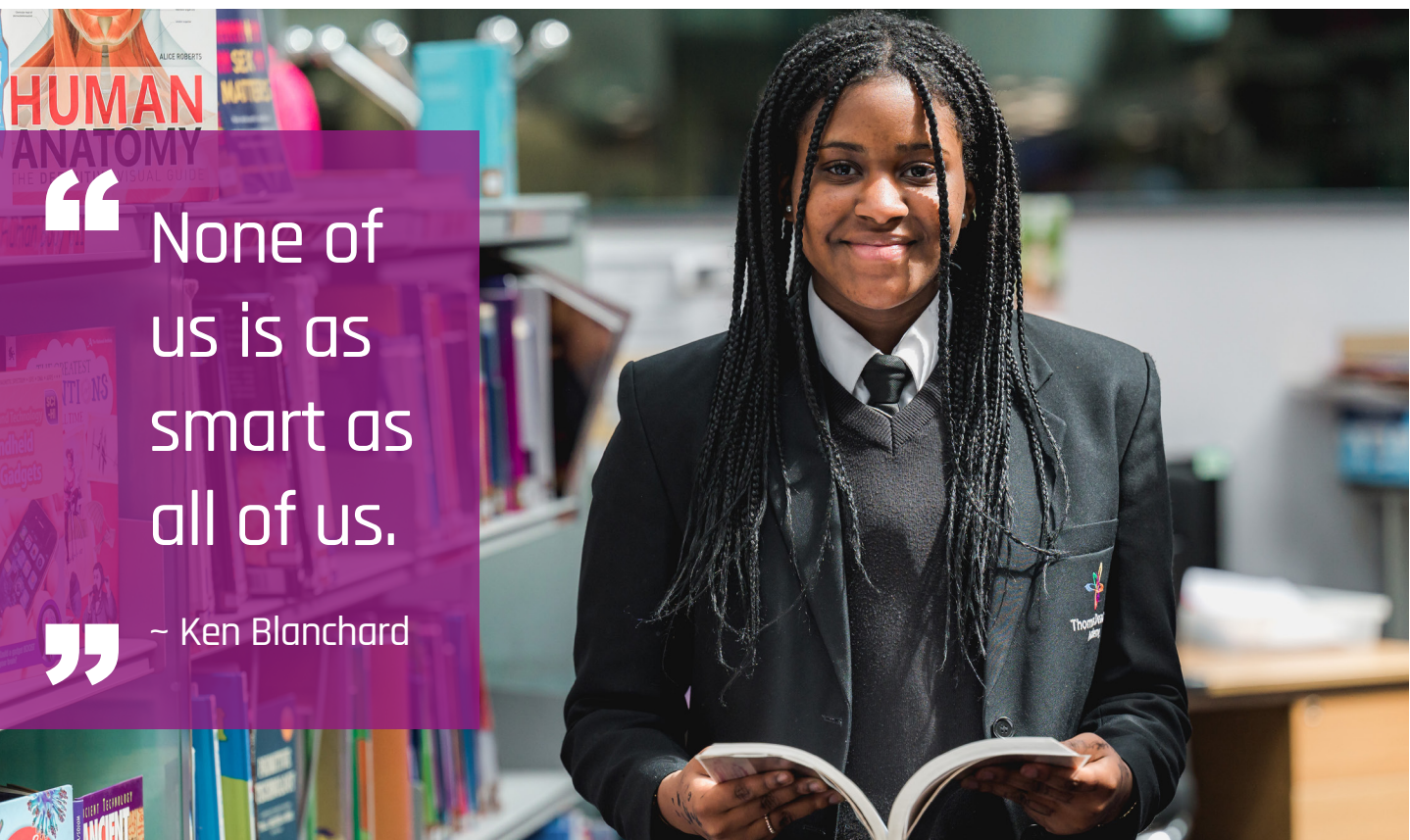
Of course, it is essential that we only collaborate when it is appropriate and meaningful to do so.

Some examples of **when it is appropriate** include:

-  Working on **complex projects**. Collaboration is often necessary for complex projects that require input from multiple individuals or teams. Collaborative efforts can help ensure that all perspectives are taken into account and that the final outcome is comprehensive and effective.
-  **Problem solving**. Collaboration can be effective in problem solving situations as it allows for different perspectives and approaches to be considered. Collaborative efforts can help to identify potential solutions and find the most effective way forward.
-  Collaboration can be a key driver of **innovation**, as it brings together individuals with diverse skillsets and perspectives. Collaborative efforts can help to generate new ideas and identify new opportunities for development.
-  Collaboration can be an effective way to promote **learning and development** in the workplace. Collaborative efforts can help individuals to learn from each other, share knowledge and skills, and develop new competencies.

While collaboration is generally beneficial in most workplace situations there may be certain situations **where it is inappropriate or ineffective**. Here are a few examples:

-  Collaborating on **simple, routine tasks** may be unnecessary and waste time and resources.
-  When working with **confidential or sensitive information** which may increase the risk of data breaches.
-  When working to **tight deadlines**, collaboration may slow down the decision-making process and increase the risk of delays.










“None of us is as smart as all of us.”

~ Ken Blanchard



Our organisational commitments

We are clear in our belief that by working together and embracing the benefits that collaboration can bring we will achieve our collective vision and mission. We are committed to creating the climate and conditions which not only encourages collaboration but enables thriving and impactful collaborative practice and activity to take place. To that end we will:

-  **Support colleagues** to develop the skills and qualities needed to be involved in successful collaborative activity, alongside developing the opportunities for collaboration and team development.
-  Create a **climate of psychological safety** and ensure that colleagues understand the need for common attitudes: widespread respect for colleagues' contributions, openness to experimenting with others' ideas, and sensitivity to how one's actions may affect both colleagues' work and the mission's outcome. This approach closely aligns with TDET's values of trust and diversity supported by our inclusive approach where we create equity based on contribution and not actual or perceived hierarchy.
-  Provide **opportunity for challenge** in a non-hierarchical manner that allows us to involve a range of stakeholders and genuinely value the contributions of all. We encourage the use of contributory dissent in order for ideas and thinking to be professionally challenged without undermining leadership or group cohesion. We understand that conflicts may arise during collaborative work and we will have a process in place for resolving them in a constructive manner.
-  Ensure that **collaboration leads to actions** by ensuring the activity has clarity of purpose - knowledge of how it supports the achievement of our collective goals - alongside a named individual with the responsibility for co-ordination of the activity including developing preparatory work and delivering an outcome.
-  Through a range of communications, **raise awareness**, celebrate and promote the value of collaboration, the opportunities available and the impact of collaborative work undertaken.
-  Encourage and enable colleagues to participate in collaborative activity as an entitlement within our **Continuous Development** processes.
-  **Provide solutions** to the common barriers of time and geography.







Our ask of each other

Successful collaboration is dependent upon the positive mindsets of the individuals involved and our values led behaviours; the work of any collaborative group is dependent upon the professional courtesy of those involved. More specifically the skills and qualities required include:

Active listening

Research suggests that all too often when others are talking, we're getting ready to speak instead of listening. We fail to listen because we're anxious about our own performance, convinced that our ideas are better than others', or both.



When we really listen, on the other hand, our egos and our self-involvement subside, giving everybody the space to understand the situation - and one another - and to focus on the mission. Listening can be improved by these practices:

-  Asking expansive questions.
-  Focusing on the listener, not on yourself.
-  Engaging in 'self-checks'.
-  Becoming comfortable with silence.
-  Listening without interruption or judgement.
-  Ensuring all participants have an equal opportunity to contribute.

Empathy




In successful collaborations, each person assumes that everyone else involved, regardless of background or title, is smart, caring, and fully invested. That mindset makes participants want to understand why others have differing views, which allows them to have constructive conversations.

Judgment gives way to curiosity, and people come to see that other perspectives are as valuable as theirs. Approaches include:

-  Expand on others' thinking.
-  Look for the unspoken



Feedback

Good collaboration involves giving and receiving feedback well - and from a position of influence rather than one of authority.

-  Discuss feedback aversion openly. As recipients, we feel tension between the desire to improve and the desire to be accepted for who we are.
-  Make feedback about others' behaviour direct, specific, and applicable. Be straightforward in both how you address a person and what you say about them; identify the particular behaviour that worked (or didn't); and describe the impact of the behaviour on you and others. These practices help counteract a common problem: people's feedback is too general.
-  Add a 'plus' to others' ideas. Make your teammate look good by enhancing the scene or project they have started.

Leadership and followership

The best collaborators - those known for adding value to interactions and solving problems in ways that left everyone better off - are adept at both leading and following, moving smoothly between the two as appropriate. That is, they're good at flexing. But because flexing requires ceding control to others, many of us find it difficult.

-  Increase self-awareness. Our overly optimistic self-perceptions drive our decisions about whether to allow others to have control.
-  Learn to delegate. It's hard to let go of control, and we feel responsible for the outcome and are aware that the task needs to get done 'right'. So, we focus on the short-term results rather than the long-term goal of developing others through delegation.

Clarity

We need to ensure that we are concrete in our communications and provide vivid images of goals. In this way everyone who is part of the collaboration understands what the goals are and how they can be achieved.

Create win-win situations

In successful collaborative projects, people are open about their personal interests and how they think they can contribute to solving the problem. Such transparency allows participants to explore everyone's vision of winning and, ultimately, get more favourable results.



Gladstone Primary
Academy



Queen Katharine
Academy



Richard Barnes
Academy



Thomas Deacon
Academy



Upwood Primary
Academy



Warboys Primary
Academy



Welbourne Primary
Academy



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