



Thomas Deacon Education Trust

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Unity of Purpose

Trust | Diversity | Excellence | Transformation

Welcome to TDET

*Central Education Services*

# Introduction

## to TDET Central Education Services



TDET is committed to providing the highest quality of education to all the pupils in all the academies and settings that form our Trust.

We firmly believe that education is not just about tests and exam results, recognising however that these are important. Even more so, we want all of our pupils to receive a rich and diverse range of opportunities, underpinned by the highest quality of teaching and care that enables them to thrive.

Our education improvement framework operates within a continuum where some aspects of practice are standardised (centrally directed), some become aligned through the sharing of good practice, and some are entirely within the control of the academy.

The Central Education team is led by our Director of Education who is responsible for the Trust's overall education strategy and the improvement of standards, provision, and outcomes in all academies. The Director of Education line manages all academy Principals, a small central team of experts and orchestrates the improvement challenge and support.

In addition to this we are also able to draw upon a number of Specialist Leaders in Education employed within the Trust and a range of experienced senior and middle leaders including our Principals who are increasingly taking responsibility for leading Trust-wide development.

This document will give you an outline of what you can expect from our services but if you have any further questions, please get in touch.

# Introduction

## to Thomas Deacon Education Trust

TDET is a multi-academy trust and charitable organisation dedicated to raising educational outcomes across a range of primary and secondary phase schools and academies in the East Midlands.

We are a trust that unites and empowers like-minded schools to achieve the very best for our pupils and communities. At the heart of our vision is a profound belief that difference is a strength to be valued and celebrated.

TDET academies are connected by a common set of values to empower every pupil, every member of staff, parents and the community through high quality education.



### **Trust**

We are honest and supportive



### **Diversity**

We embrace individual differences



### **Excellence**

We want the very best and never give up on doing what is right



### **Transformation**

We work together to make a positive impact

We work across all key phases of education to provide every child in our communities with the best life chances and high aspirations. All TDET schools strive to give our pupils the very best education possible and we insist upon the highest academic standards.

Our academies work closely together, taking part in real and meaningful collaborations between teachers, pupils and local business leaders. We value our local communities and actively encourage our schools and staff to share best practice to benefit all pupils within each local area.

Through experience, we know that there is no such thing as a one-size-fits-all approach to education. Our academies are individual members of the Trust community and are connected by a common set of values including Trust, Diversity, Excellence and Transformation, but are free to innovate and adapt to the needs of their pupils and the local community.

We firmly believe that the Trust as a whole is more than the sum of its parts. Therefore, all of our schools are equally valued and contribute to the development and direction of the Trust as we grow together.

# Education Improvement Pillars



We have a clear, well-considered and structured approach to school improvement which is underpinned by a number of fundamental pillars supported by the TDET values:



Trust



Diversity



Excellence



Transformation

## A deep understanding of our individual academies' strengths and needs

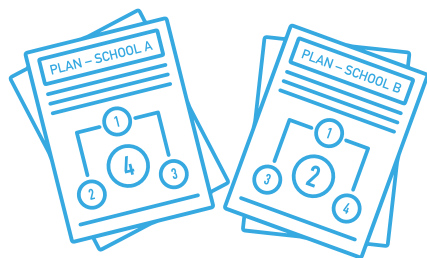
A range of diagnostic 'tools' are used to capture and understand each academy, including:

- Assessment data
- Outcome data from national tests
- Self-evaluation based on accurate internal quality assurance
- Challenge partner evidence
- Ofsted reports
- Parent view
- IDSR
- Staff/student surveys

Through the use of a standard data set, progress and performance is monitored not just in tests and exams but also in real time at key points across the year.

This is presented in varying degrees of depth according to the audience: teachers and year leaders are able to use the data as a formative assessment tool, while Academy Committee members and Trustees have access to a dashboard that provides a graphic overview of how each academy is performing. The data dashboards also track performance in areas such as attendance (of staff and pupils), exclusions, child protection, special needs, applications for admissions, and financial management.





## An adaptation of approach to individual academy context

Whilst we are clear that there are a number of aspects of our work where standardisation is essential, we are also clear that we operate on a continuum from this standardisation to alignment and through to autonomy. We have a clear understanding of where each academy is on its improvement journey and a pin-point awareness of the issues that need to be addressed, alongside the actions that need to be taken for the academy to improve.

Each academy develops its own strategic plan which sits underneath the over-arching Trust strategic plan. From there an Academy Annual Action Plan is developed to build on strengths and address areas of relative weakness. This plan sets out clear objectives and success criteria alongside associated actions, resource requirement, monitoring systems and evaluative methods.



## A well-considered approach to curriculum design and implementation

We believe that a well-designed and sequenced curriculum is essential if our students are to be successful and the Trust is to achieve its strategic objectives. We have therefore identified a clear curriculum intent statement:

- Our young people are well-prepared for the next stage of their life as global contributors with clear moral purpose.
- Through the experience of a broad range of entitlement opportunities for their personal, social, cultural, and academic progress they develop a set of skills underpinned by their own authentic values.
- Individuals possess a strong body of transferable core knowledge which they can articulate effectively, drawing upon a wide vocabulary.

In order to achieve this, we have begun to identify the clear knowledge, vocabulary and skills required in each subject as well as in the wider curriculum. We are now in the process of developing this so that there is vertical continuity within subjects and that we are mapping the links across the subjects so students can begin to build their wider understanding by applying knowledge in different contexts.

# Education Improvement Pillars



## Collaborative practice to develop and utilise expertise and capacity

One of the Trust's four key values is Transformation; We work together to make a positive impact. We are very clear that we are more than the sum of our parts and that by working together to utilise the expertise, knowledge and skills across the Trust, we can accelerate school improvement.

A range of partnership activity exists, not only to share good practice but also to collectively quality assure and scrutinise existing practice within a trusting but challenging environment. This partnership activity is not exclusive to senior leaders but extends through to middle leaders, who work together on such things as curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. Additionally, the collaborative activity enables us to drive continuous professional development across the Trust at all levels including support staff, classroom teachers and leaders.

We are also aware that not all the expertise and knowledge we need lies within the Trust and have developed a range of partnerships and networks so that our school improvement work is enhanced by experts outside the Trust.



## Strategic and responsive deployment of expertise

We ensure that resources are prepared to tackle areas for development. This requires a clear understanding of where expertise exists if outside the personnel within the central team and we have a log of staff strengths within the academies across the Trust.

At times leaders may be utilised to support academies that have particular challenges. This may only be for part of the week and/or for a limited time – a term or an academic year – though sometimes a temporary assignment evolves into becoming permanent.

The strategic deployment of expertise is about more than addressing weaknesses. We are also able to adapt interventions and support to maintain momentum as an academy improves and we can refresh strategies as appropriate.



## Evidence informed practice

A significant wealth of knowledge exists that provides an evidence base of what works in school improvement. At TDET, we use this as a basis to develop our school improvement strategies and approaches and all staff are encouraged to research existing evidence before any changes are made.

Action research and inquiry-based learning is also encouraged as part of the Trust's professional development offer which helps staff to learn with and from each other and to make an impact on student learning and progress.



## Relentless and resilient pursuit of improvement

The Trust's value of Excellence states that "we want the very best and never give up on doing what is right". Whilst this is sometimes challenging, we have a culture of 'no excuses' and believe that every child can achieve.

We know that school improvement is not a linear process and along the way there will be challenges and setbacks. In the same way that we encourage our pupils to be resilient, we also accept that staff, academies and the Trust also need to be resilient in persevering with improvement activity. There are few quick fixes to sustainable improvement and while we wish to see rapid developments, we are ethical in our practice.



## Clear monitoring and evaluation of impact

We firmly believe that we need to be able to demonstrate the impact the Trust are making on improving all our academies and how we 'add value' to the staff and pupils across the organisation.

We assess and understand the impact of specific interventions and initiatives and track the impact of programmes on staff capability, classroom practice and student engagement/learning.

We also regularly evaluate the health and organisational maturity of the Trust itself using a framework of self-evaluation.

# Specific services



At TDET, we are committed to providing the highest quality service to our pupils and staff in all the academies and settings that make up our Trust.

Part of this commitment is recognising and understanding that the needs of our academies will shift and change over time. To support this, we provide a fluid, flexible and ever-changing range of services, which are moulded to fit their rapidly shifting individual requirements.

Here are a selection of some of the services we have provided to our academies over the last few years.





## EAL and literacy

Early communication skills, vocabulary and overall levels of academic literacy, coupled with key factors such as home language background, bilingualism and dates of entry into UK education, all underpin and influence the quality of education that we provide for our students across the Trust.

With an increasing emphasis on the knowledge-based curriculum, our work to date has focused on planning vocabulary and reading pedagogy to support learning across the whole curriculum. We have developed strategies to ensure that all children read widely and often across all subject domains within academies that place the library at the heart of their school. We have also promoted oracy as an essential tool in learning and a basis for academic and creative writing.

As we serve pupils and families with a wide range of ethnicities, cultural backgrounds and linguistic experiences, as part of mobile populations, we have also provided support with English language and home language assessment, welcome and induction programmes to facilitate smooth access into the new school environment. We have promoted and actively developed the use of pupils' home languages, while offering professional development to staff in understanding the cultural backgrounds of our students and how best to meet their needs within the classroom.



## SEND and inclusion

As a Trust, we have worked closely with each academy SENDCo to ensure that the provision for young people with SEND is of the highest quality, supports the development of the whole child, and achieves the best possible outcomes.

We are aspirational in our approach, providing pupils with high quality education and experiences that enable our young people with SEND to lead healthy and fulfilled lives, participate as active citizens within local communities and go on to access appropriate employment or training opportunities.

We have supported each SENDCo to establish their strategic vision for SEND within each individual academy. Advice and guidance have been provided around the identified areas of priority and focus within each Academy Development Plan and the operational processes that need to be established in order to move forward.

Annual Trust wide training and a wide range of assessment tools have been used across the Trust in order to support identification of need. Intervention successes have also been shared frequently across Trust settings and opportunities to visit and observe have been provided.

We have a comprehensive knowledge of local policy and practice and have supported SENDCos in collating evidence for EHCP requests, preparation for tribunals and referrals into specialist services.

# Specific services



## Pupil Premium

TDET serves a diverse and wide range of pupils, many of whom are classed as disadvantaged. We firmly believe in embracing individual differences and enhancing social mobility and have worked hard to offer our most vulnerable learners an educational experience that meets their diverse range of needs, empowers them to overcome the barriers to their learning and supports them to meet their potential.

We have provided tailored support to key leaders in our academies to help them refine and improve their Pupil Premium strategy, while developing the quality of leadership to enable the successful implementation of these strategies. We have also enabled all our academies to be compliant regarding our Pupil Premium requirements and have ensured that Local Academy Committee members and other key stakeholders understand their responsibilities with regard to the use of the Pupil Premium funding and are in a position to offer informed challenge to our leadership teams.



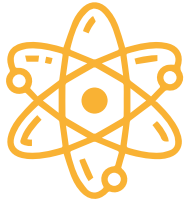
## Power Learning

Power Learning is an exciting new approach to teaching English and Maths we have implemented at many of our academies. The model means students are taught in classes according to their ability rather than their age and lessons are more structured, providing a positive and clear foundation for the students' learning.

A lesson sequence begins with a teacher teaching the content first-hand to students and then supporting students with examples. Following this, the students work with partners before working individually.

The approach is clear, carefully planned and accessible for learners and can be adapted to fit students' needs. Not only has it dramatically improved the pace of lessons, and allowed classes to move through content much quicker, covering more topics, but it has also helped our staff as a form of formative assessment.

Before implementing Power Learning, our staff had the opportunity to visit schools in Sunderland, Leeds and Peterborough to see the great impact it was having.



## Primary science

Across the Trust, there was a recognition that in our primary academies, science had been a subject that had not developed in the way we would wish, resulting in gaps in the knowledge, skills and understanding of our pupils.

We therefore invested in the development of a Trust primary science curriculum which fed into the secondary provision. This work was led by a secondary trained teacher who mapped out a coherently sequenced curriculum that set out a clear framework of knowledge, skills and vocabulary. They created resources to support the implementation of the curriculum and provided professional development for staff. This has resulted in teachers feeling more confident in their subject knowledge with subsequent improvements in the quality of teaching and learning in science.

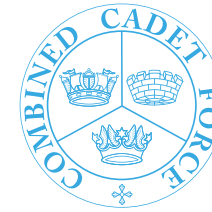


## Physical education and sport

We firmly believe in the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and the part that PE and Sport can play in the wider personal development of young people, as well as improving their physical and mental health.

As a Trust, we have delivered specialist teaching in our primary academies, alongside a range of both recreational and competitive extra-curricular activities. We have provided lunchtime clubs for cricket, dodgeball and netball, and afterschool clubs, including football, gymnastics, tag rugby and multisport. Through these clubs, we aim to involve more children in physical activity and raise the profile of PE.

Due to sharing best practice across our schools, we have been able to quickly adapt our approach so that every child can benefit and feel healthier and happier. Ultimately, we want our pupils to build leadership and teamwork skills, see the importance of physical activity for their health, and realise that it can be fun and enjoyable.



## Combined Cadet Force

TDET has a significant commitment to developing character education and a broad set of skills across a wide range of opportunities in the wider curriculum. The CCF uses the military as a framework to develop life-transferable skills. There are battle drills, field craft, ambushes, plus adventure training such as mountain biking, archery and kayaking. Cadets learn how to work effectively as a team member and how to overcome challenges in situations in which they might not necessarily be confident.

We have also implemented a Mini Cadet scheme which is a growing part of TDET and provides a fun, interactive volunteering opportunity for our younger pupils. After writing letters to a superior about why they want to join, pupils are given a passport that needs to be signed weekly. It contains activities and jobs such as walking the neighbour's dog, doing the washing up or helping tidy up. Mini Cadets learn to 'put their best foot forward' at all times and it's very important that they are a role model to all.

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