



# **DDAT School Improvement Policy**

**January 2024**

**Approved by the Trust Board on: 12<sup>th</sup> February 2024**

The Trust improvement policy outlines our intent to create a community of high performing schools. The central school improvement function will interact seamlessly with existing expertise in our schools to enable continual school improvement through collaboration, support and challenge. It provides clarity of the expectation for each school within Derby Diocesan Academy Trust (DDAT) and is a commitment to promote and secure:

- Effective leadership and governance in all schools
- High quality education and high levels of achievement for all pupils
- Opportunities for the identification and dissemination of effective practice
- Affordability and value for money
- Peer to peer support and networking opportunities
- Where appropriate Trust to Trust support and networking opportunities

This Trust improvement policy recognises the principles on which the Trust was founded. The policy recognises schools' individual community and identity so that providers can respond to contextual factors when refining systems and processes. It also ensures that intervention can be applied at the earliest possible opportunity where required to prevent schools becoming a cause for concern.

All schools receive support and challenge through regular visits from members of the school improvement team (SIT) Appendix A. All senior school improvement officers have areas of specific responsibility across the Trust such as early years, secondary, writing and special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The support and challenge is bespoke to each school and driven by the content of the individual school improvement plans. Each school is entitled to a minimum of six visits per academic year. Where identified by the SIT, or others within DDAT a school may receive additional visits over the course of an academic year. All visits are negotiated with school leaders.

School improvement plans and school self-evaluation documentation is updated regularly by school leaders. These documents provide a live picture of what is happening in the DDAT schools. They are accessible to SIT members on platforms and are RAG rated as the academic year progresses and school priorities change.

To ensure all schools in the trust are fully supported all members of the SIT meet fortnightly to discuss the latest intelligence from their visits to schools. Intelligence is triangulated with sources of information from other DDAT departments such as finance, operations and human resources to ensure appropriate action is taken to fully support the schools.

Trust wide strategy documents, produced by SIT members, for SEND, the early years and those pupils who are disadvantaged direct everyday practice in schools. Reviews or audits of areas such as the early years or SEND are planned according to need and the position of the school in the Ofsted inspection window. These are counted as part of the core entitlement within the minimum six visits. Safeguarding advice, support and audits carried out by the DDAT Safeguarding Lead sit outside of the core entitlement and are provided by the trust to ensure all children in the trust are kept safe.

Each term pupil data is collected from the schools for all pupils in the core subjects. This is teacher assessment underpinned by standardised tests. This data gives a trust wide picture of strengths and weaknesses and is again used to measure the performance of the DDAT schools. Likewise statutory test outcomes are rigorously analysed centrally.

School health check meetings are held on an annual basis, and more frequently where there is a need. These enable a two-way flow of information between school and DDAT central functions which again strengthens triangulation. The school health check meetings cover areas such as the quality of education, behaviour and attitudes, personal development, the early years or sixth form and leadership and management. They also include health and safety, internal audit and other financial/non-financial controls and safeguarding. As part of this process headteachers are expected to address any identified areas and demonstrate impact at future opportunities.

DDAT provides a high-quality training and CPD offer for all staff. The offer is exceptionally extensive and includes termly headteacher briefings, subject and leadership networks, conferences, ECT training support and coaching as well as a range of NPQs. The offer is reviewed annually and informed by stakeholder feedback.

Given the many talented practitioners in the DDAT schools SIT members draw on this expertise to support colleagues in other schools from time to time when there is a need. This may be at senior leader level or in the classroom.

Headteacher performance management is supported by the SIT members working in conjunction with local governing boards. This helps to ensure trust oversight of key targets for school leaders.

All schools are fully supported through the Ofsted inspection process. All members of the SIT are either ex HMI, ex SHMI or serving Ofsted inspectors. This experience is valued by DDAT school leaders.

Information around school performance is shared with the Education and Standards Committee of the trust board three times per year. Key senior leaders from across DDAT are invited to present to the committee on specific areas such as secondary outcomes and attendance.

Where Executive Leaders and Trustees consider that there is an educational cause for concern The Education and Standards Committee will set up a Raising Achievement Board (RAB). The Education and Standards Committee will ask the headteacher accompanied by the Chair of Governors to present a plan to rectify underperformance and to explain the plan, in person, to a specially convened meeting. The RAB will be made up of suitably qualified people able to fulfil this function and monitor the progress of the school.

External support may be brought into support schools where there is insufficient capacity within DDAT. This support must be agreed in advance with the CEO. In

such cases where the Trust feel it is necessary, they will commission external reviews in key areas where needed.

## Appendix A

### School Improvement Summary Flow Chart

