

# GAT Primary Academy Improvement and Support Strategy

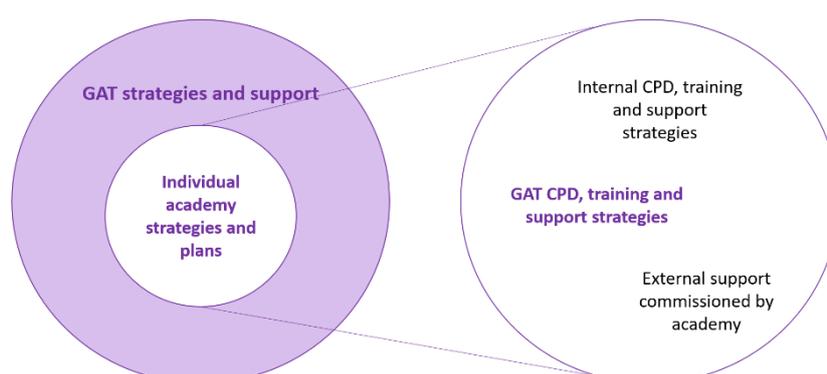
## Academic year 2021/22

There are 25 primary schools in Greenwood Academies Trust. These include an all through (3-19) academy, 3 infant academies and 5 junior academies. As of September 2021, all but three of these academies are judged at least 'good' by Ofsted.

Our primary academies work in different areas of the country, in a range of contexts, serving different communities so it is important that our improvement strategies and ways of working reflect this. We encourage each academy to develop uniquely; there is no centralised curriculum or standard teaching pedagogies to be implemented, although there are some minimum standards and processes expected. However, a trained eye may spot a higher level of similarity and consistency across the phase than you might expect from this approach. This is because there is a high level of collaboration between practitioners and leaders which results in a strong understanding of best practice in some areas and a commitment to work together to reduce workload. Our primary academies are organised into regional clusters and for most of them this results in very strong local networks of support.

Our improvement strategy is based on a fundamental belief that academies will be great if everyone in and associated with an academy is great in their role, whatever that is. Therefore, support, development and training is crucially important. In particular, high quality leadership, succession planning and developing sufficient leadership capacity is essential so that effective individual academy strategies and plans can be developed and implemented. We support academies to have an autonomous vision, aligned to GAT values, with self-sustaining continual improvement plans, benefiting from central support.

GAT does not seek to provide ALL the support each academy needs; we want academies to be part of effective local and national partnerships that will contribute to their work. The amount of support provided to each academy by GAT is differentiated according to need and bespoke to each academy. In addition to this, we expect academies to pick and choose other most relevant sources of support. Our focus will be on the cumulative impact of all an academy's strategies, activities and plans.



We are proud of the quality of leadership and the effectiveness of practitioners in our academies. Developing these individuals and using them to support other academies is a key part of our improvement work, as well as being beneficial personal professional development for those involved. This happens explicitly through our Assurance Boards and we also use Principals to become 'Improvement Partners' for academies that are either our most challenged or have particular areas of development that match expertise.

## The Education Directorate Primary Team:

The Primary Team is part of the wider GAT 'Education Directorate'. It is led by a Strategic Director of Academies and is comprised of four Education Directors and two Advisers. Each Education Director has a portfolio of academies, a regional responsibility and an improvement strategy.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
<b>Annette Montague</b>	Strategic Director of Academies	Overall Primary Improvement and Support Strategy
<b>Andy Clarke</b>	Education Director	Regional – Corby  Strategy – Curriculum Assurance Board  Other – GAT's Equality and Diversity strategy
<b>Charlotte Krzanicki</b>	Education Director	Regional – Peterborough and Nottinghamshire  Strategy – Learning Assurance Board and Learning Alliance
<b>Darren Price</b>	Education Director	Regional – East Coast and Nottingham  Strategy – Raising Attainment Board and Assessment Strategy
<b>Emma Nuttall</b>	Education Director	Regional – Leicester and Northampton  Strategy – Ofsted readiness and Disadvantaged
<b>Martha Mullan</b>	Early Years Adviser	Strategy – Early Years
<b>Martin Smith</b>	Senior Adviser- Academic Resilience	Strategy – Outdoor Learning including Educational Visits

## Our academies

The collaborative approach that we have developed is key to supporting our academies achieve better outcomes than they would have done working independently. We aspire for all our academies to be thriving, exciting and inspiring places to learn as well as continually developing – there is no such thing as an improvement journey completed!

What we all have in common is a relentless desire to give each and every learner the best educational opportunities to enable them to have choices in life. We want all staff to excel and be creative, adaptive and responsive to the needs of our learners so we put staff and leadership development at the heart of all we do and as a GAT Primary Team strive to get the right balance between support and challenge

We do not believe that an Ofsted grade is always an accurate reflection of an academy's current performance but the below table gives an indication of the journeys made by our academies since joining the Trust:

### Ofsted Overall Effectiveness Grades for GAT Primary Academies:

	<b>Prior to joining GAT</b>	<b>Current</b>
Beacon Primary Academy	Opened by GAT	Good
Bishop Creighton Academy	Special Measures	Good
Corby Primary Academy	Opened by GAT	Outstanding
Danesholme Infant Academy	Special Measures	Requires Improvement
Danesholme Junior Academy	Requires Improvement	Good
Dogsthorpe Junior Academy	Special Measures	Good
Green Oaks Primary Academy	Special Measures	Good
Hazel Leys Academy	Requires Improvement	Good
Ingoldmells Academy	Good	Good
Kingswood Primary Academy	Requires Improvement	Good
Mablethorpe Primary Academy	Special Measures	Good
Mansfield Primary Academy	Requires Improvement	Good
Newark Hill Academy	Special Measures	Good
Nottingham Primary Academy*	Good	Requires Improvement
Queensmead Primary Academy	Special Measures	Good
Rushden Primary Academy	Opened by GAT	Good
Seathorne Academy	Good	Good
Skegby Junior Academy	Requires Improvement	Good
Skegness Infant Academy d	Good	Good
Skegness Junior Academy	Special Measures	Good
Studfall Infant Academy	Good	Good
Studfall Junior Academy	Good	Good
Sunnyside Primary Academy	Requires Improvement	Good
Welland Academy	Special Measures	Good
Woodvale Primary Academy	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement

\*(note – inspected as 3-19)

## The GAT Academy Improvement and Support Strategy

Our 'Improvement Support Strategy' is made up of 3 key elements:

- 1: Building capacity and expertise in leaders and practitioners** – through assurance boards, Learning Alliance opportunities, networks and professional learning
- 2: Ensuring effective and accurate academy-level bespoke Improvement Plans** – that are clear about improvement priorities and key tasks and activities to bring about improvement
- 3: Ensuring high quality, effective trust-level quality assurance processes** – to provide information to trustees and valuable feedback to academies

### Building Capacity and Expertise:

#### **1: Assurance Boards**

At the heart of our improvement strategy are our Assurance Boards – for **Standards**, **Learning** and the **Curriculum**. These are chaired by Education Directors and the membership is identified senior leaders from academies. Each group is there to develop expertise and capacity in the Trust in these key focus areas. They work collaboratively, and with relevant experts, to develop best practice and engage in national debate. They are involved in the assurance process and will be developing exemplars and signposting resources. The GAT additional strategies of **Careers and Employability**, **Sport** and **Outdoor Learning** are integrated into the work of the Assurance Boards.

#### **Curriculum Assurance Board (CAB)**

The primary CAB is comprised of a representative from each primary academy. It aims to ensure that the curriculum offered in all academies is inclusive and high quality. It leads the development of the Curriculum Reviews. It produces an annual report for the Standards Committee summarising the strengths and areas for improvement in terms of curriculum development across all primary academies and updates them about the CAB strategy. It works closely with colleagues leading on Outdoor Learning and Careers and Employability.

#### **Learning Assurance Board (LAB)**

The primary LAB is comprised of an identified outstanding practitioner from each academy. It aims to improve the quality of learning in all academies and leads the development of Learning Reviews. It works closely with the **GAT Learning Alliance** to ensure CPD and training is strategically planned to maximise impact in our academies and with GAT IT colleagues to be joined up with these developments. The LAB produces an annual report for the Standards Committee summarising the strengths and areas for improvement in terms of the quality of teaching and learning across all primary academies and updates them about the LAB strategy.

#### **Raising Attainment Board (RAB)**

The primary RAB is comprised of Raising Standards Leads from each academy. It aims to raise standards in all academies, focusing on end of key stage outcomes and leads the development of the Performance Dialogue process. Its work is closely linked to the **GAT Primary Assessment Protocol** which we expect all academies to follow. This details how we expect academies to assess, monitor and predict statutory outcomes both internally and to the Trust. The RAB produces regular reports detailing actual and predicted test outcomes and other benchmark data.

## 2: Trust-Level Improvement Priorities

There are generic issues that are faced by many academies across the Trust. For these we will develop specific programmes and projects. Involvement in these will be directed for some academies but will usually be for individual academies to opt into. The programmes will be a combination of on-going priorities – such as our [Early Years](#), [Ofsted Readiness](#) and [Disadvantaged strategies](#), but can be shorter term and we seek to work with relevant partners where appropriate to add value to projects.

### Early Years Strategy

GAT passionately believes in the importance of developing highly effective practice in the Early Years. We know that it is the crucial start of school life, and a time when both children and their parents form opinions about lifelong learning and education. Whilst we know that our Early Years practice is strong, it is important to keep this as a focus. Our Early Years Strategy ensures that Early Years practitioners are supported to continually develop their practice and academy leaders retain appropriate oversight of this important stage of education.

### Disadvantaged Strategy

The GAT Disadvantaged Strategy recognises that a high proportion of children in our academies live in contexts that mean educational progress is more challenging for them than it could be. In order to support all our pupils to maximise the opportunities we provide for them, practitioners and leaders in our schools need to be exceptional. The Disadvantaged Strategy supports academies to ensure leaders are aware of best practice and continually improve in this area. We have supported key leaders to become nationally accredited Pupil Premium Reviewers and ensure all academies will have a Pupil Premium Review within a 3-4 year cycle in addition to those where Ofsted requests a Pupil Premium Review.

### Ofsted Readiness Strategy

This strategy aims to deliver support to Principals and their teams so that they are confident and well prepared for an Ofsted inspection.

We aim that our annual cycle of quality assurance, ED support and professional learning ensures academies achieve their improvement priorities, embed high quality leadership and are sustainably improving. We do not expect academies to be doing additional work to prepare for inspections; this strategy is merely to reduce stress on key individuals working in academies by supporting them to become more familiar with the inspection process and its activities in order to ensure the academy can present itself effectively and enable an accurate judgement of the academy to be made by inspectors.

Inspection readiness involves identifying academies that are likely to be due an inspection within the academic year. We acknowledge that this is not an exact science, and this will not prepare academies for all inspections as ‘windows’ are indicators only and inspections can be carried out without notice. Principals will work with their ED to develop the skills and expertise of the academy team through selecting a range of activities linked to inspection methodology.

## 3: Additional professional learning and networking

Additional training and leadership development opportunities run throughout the year through the [GAT Learning Alliance](#) with termly events specifically designated for Principals – the [Principals’ Days](#) and a [Leadership Conference](#) in the Spring term. In addition, we arrange visits to GAT academies throughout the year to showcase good practice and support further Principal-level networking.

The Trust uses Microsoft Teams and uses this well for communication, networking and sharing practice.

## Ensuring effective and sustainable academy-level improvement:

The most important part of our Improvement Strategy is ensuring each academy can effectively self evaluate and develop personalised, aspirational Improvement Plans that bring about rapid improvement where necessary and foster a culture of continual development.

### **The Role of the Education Director**

All academies have an allocated Education Director (ED). They provide professional challenge and support to an academy, helping its leadership to effectively evaluate its performance, identify priorities for improvement and plan effective change. The ED takes the academy through the Improvement and Assurance work, ensuring all meetings, reviews etc are completed and internal monitoring processes are adhered to. The amount of contact an academy and ED have will depend on a range of factors such as current issues and the overall academy RAG rating.

### **Key principles of the Improvement Strategy**

The GAT Improvement Support Strategy is founded on a number of principles:

- the prime responsibility for academy improvement remains with the Principal
- academies are encouraged to have an autonomous vision, aligned to GAT values
- the expectations of contribution and involvement in assurance activities are clearly identified in the Primary Improvement and Support Framework
- capacity and expertise for system led improvement will be supported and developed
- the professional partnership and communication between the Principal and EDs is critical but academies will benefit from the expertise of the whole primary team
- the amount of support provided to academies depends on their needs, as identified through a risk monitoring process
- processes are designed to be positive, focusing on strengths as well as identifying areas for development
- formal delegated responsibilities (Eg for budget) are described in GAT schemes of delegation but if concerns are identified, delegated responsibilities can be removed and given to EDs.

### **Academy RAG ratings**

Each academy an overall 'RAG' rating (Red, Amber, Green) to help us allocate the appropriate level of internal support and challenge in order to secure improvement.

A wide range of information is used to determine the overall RAG rating. Key indicators relate to Ofsted categories and education outcomes in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stages 1 and 2, but other factors including information on school leadership and staffing capacity, attendance and exclusion data, stakeholder feedback, staffing changes, finance and other information are considered.

The overall RAG is underpinned by a number of identified 'Risk Indicators' that are clearly described in the Primary Framework. Principals have the opportunity to self-review these initially, before they are discussed with their ED and formally signed off by the Strategic Director.

RAG ratings on individual Risk Indicators and for the overall RAG are reviewed at least termly but can be changed at any time to reflect the ever-changing landscape that academies work in.

