



Welcome to our Learning Community Trust

**Advancing schools, Inspiring Learners,
Transforming Communities**

Trust Overview, January 2020

**Gill Eatough - CEO
Mike Briscoe – Chair of LCT Board**

**Produced on behalf of:
Members, Trustees, Directors and staff of the Learning Community Trust**

1 Introduction

This document provides an overview of the Learning Community Trust and its vision, aims and operation. It sets out the rationale for the Trust and the key drivers for school improvement across our Academies and schools that may join us, as well as setting out the future direction for the Trust.

Alongside this document we have a strategic plan that sets out our vision and our four key objectives focussed on our learners, our staff, school improvement, Governance and leadership. We have in place an annual Trust Operational Plan which defines the tasks, targets and milestones for our 7 key areas of focus, monitors the progress of the Trust at an operational level and the key areas for school improvement.

Linking to the Trust Annual Operational Plan, each Trust Academy (school) also has its own School Improvement Plan and Self-Evaluation Document that reflects local priorities agreed with the Local Governing Body and the CEO, these are reviewed termly and updated.

We have determined seven key areas of focus for our Trust to ensure we provide the best outcomes and experiences for our learners:

- Leadership
- Standards of Achievement
- Teaching and Learning
- Pastoral care including Safeguarding
- Community and parental engagement
- Effective management and trust services
- Governance and quality assurance

2. What is the Learning Community Trust?

Our Trust brings schools together into one organisation so that school leaders; teachers, learners and our community can work and thrive together, gaining from and supporting each other.

As a local Multi Academy Trust operating from our school-based office in North Telford, the Learning Community Trust (LCT) was incorporated in June 2017 following approvals by the DfE, we are delighted to be an Academy sponsor.

Our approach is built around a clear vision of inclusive education and a relentless drive for raising standards - we keep our focus on our learners, ensuring they are supported by great teachers, outstanding leaders and excellent facilities.

We believe in strong local management and governance, our Trust is led by our Members, our outstanding Board of Trustees and each Academy has a Local Governing Board.

The Trust Executive Function is designed to be lean and focused, providing unwavering attention on getting the best outcomes for our learners, staff and community.

We focus on research and evidence-led school improvements strategies, we develop our leaders and staff and ensure we have excellent and leading practice in our teaching, support and management practices.

Our support and management functions are wholly focused on supporting our schools, with exemplary financial management, excellent human resource support and a continuous drive for value for money, efficiency and effectiveness.

Note – Our Strategy addresses schools who may join or work with us as well as those formally confirmed as Academies within our Trust, for the purpose of this document, we consider these words to be interchangeable, hence references to schools includes Academies.

Our vision

We have a single clear vision:

“To provide an outstanding education for all of our children and young people that prepares them to be successful in all they do both now and in the future”.

To achieve this vision, we are building our Trust with an outstanding local, regional and national reputation.

Our learners and their experiences

Although it is necessary for us to have arrangements in place to run the Trust effectively, support and challenge schools and engage with our communities, our core purpose is to do the best for our learners. Alongside great teaching and pastoral care we have a commitment to:

- Raising the aspirations of all young people in our Trust to be the very best they can be
- Making our schools welcoming, inclusive and enjoyable for our students every day
- Providing world class opportunities for our learners that extends their learning and experiences within and beyond Telford
- Giving, encouraging and acting upon the voice of our learners, so they play a significant role in our Academies and Trust
- Promoting student leadership in our Academies and across our Trust so they are part of our vision and values
- Engaging learners in their own learning so they know how to succeed
- Developing confidence, resilience and determination in our young people, whatever their age
- Ensuring a safe, supportive and caring environment in our Academies so students are treated with kindness, respect and live safely in our community

3. Why our Trust exists

Our Trust exists because we have a commitment and passion for providing great schools for our community. We consider that a locally-led and accountable Trust provides the best outcomes for learners and our communities, this includes supporting schools facing challenges and ensuring the best schools become even better.

Our aspirations are solely to support and improve our schools. Alongside those that become part of our Trust, we will consider associate arrangements for schools and other educational organisations that meet our aims and would benefit from such an arrangement and support for other forms of provision where there are clear benefits for all parties.

Across all our schools and community, we provide strategic direction; support; specialist expertise; shared development and services focused on local needs. This is increasingly important at a time when the traditional Local Authority role is diminishing, resources and funding are severely constrained and support services are hard to access,

We are convinced of the importance of and value for local schools to work closely together and have designed our Trust to do just that.

We have a sound model in place and our schools are already benefiting from opportunities to have all phases of education -Secondary, Primary and Special – working and learning together with the expertise that brings into the Trust.

Our Trust also sponsors schools and has already demonstrated how effective leadership from the Trust has helped improve schools through direct challenge and support and by working closely with fellow schools.

We are proud of our Trust and its rapid growth and development since 2017 to be a significant provider of education locally. We have a high level of interest from schools wishing to join us and wish to grow steadily over the next few years.

As well as our support and services, we also look to bring in new developments and opportunities – we have already secured significant additional funding to advance our school improvement plans.

The scope of our Trust

Our involvement ranges from early years through to secondary provision where we deliver, influence and support provision at all stages.

We directly lead and support secondary schools, primary schools and SEND provision (we lead and support SEND provision through one merged school and partnership arrangements for specific provision). We have an interest in post-compulsory education and work closely with local providers while also considering the best provision for our learners post-16. The Trust has a Memorandum of Understanding in place with Telford College to forge effective curriculum links and post 16 progression.

We support schools that are high performing, and those moving from (Ofsted) categories, therefore schools facing challenges and those looking for new arrangements to improve further are welcome to see what we offer and if we can help.

We work closely with a wide range of stakeholders at strategic and operational levels, this includes collaborative and formal partnership arrangements with key partners (e.g. RSC/DfE, other West Midlands MATs, HE, Teaching School Alliances, the Local Authority for SEND and Telford College for post 16 provision).

4. Our Aims

We keep our aims at the forefront of all we do, they represent our values as well as our intentions:

- To focus, across our schools, on **excellence** by achieving the best possible educational outcomes for our children and students by engaging and inspiring them, building their resilience and preparing them for work and adult life.
- To drive a **collaborative culture** across our schools which drives and supports improvement and develops all our staff as leading professionals
- To provide the highest levels of **care and support** for our children so they can succeed, including those that are the most disadvantaged, vulnerable or with special needs in our community
- To ensure our schools are at the heart of the community they serve and are truly **inclusive** organisations with equality for all across our community
- To engage positively with our families and wider **community**, building partnerships and programmes that develop opportunities beyond the school sector

Our Structure

We have in place a clear and accountable model for governance at all levels that meets all the legal and best practice expectations and demonstrates robust and transparent arrangements for leading our Trust and schools. Our model:

- Ensures we have **strong capability and capacity** within our Governance structures and staff appointed to the Trust
- Retains a clear model of **accountability and delegated governance**, holding the CEO and key operational officers to account so the Trust runs efficiently and effectively
- Maintains **knowledge and expertise** on system improvement and outcomes for learners of all ages and settings e.g. Special, EYFS, primary, secondary and applying sound Quality Assurance practices
- Demonstrates a clear understanding of Trust Budgets and meeting responsibilities for **budget controls and accounting** procedures across the Trust with sound risk assessment procedures in place
- Has a commitment to **continuous and appropriate self-review** and training of our Members and Trustees to ensure they fulfil their key functions
- Ensures LGBs and schools within the Trust are **fit for purpose with essential skill sets** of Governors, meet clear schemes of delegation and can focus on the core business of education
- Leads and **develops the Trust** so it grows and becomes sustainable, has due diligence processes that are effective and new schools joining the Trust are well supported and challenged
- **Protects the integrity and future** of the trust including regular self-review, succession and business planning

Leadership of the Learning Community Trust and Trust Board

We believe in excellent leadership and appointed Dr. Gill Eatough as CEO of the Trust from September 2017, she was previously the Principal of HLC for 12 years and a key driver to establishing a local MAT incorporating the HLC family of schools.

The Trust has 5 members and 10 Trustees with a wealth of experience in the school system and school improvement, HR, Finance and accounting as well as from the world of business and industry:

Members	Trustees	Trust Role
<i>Dr Ganesh Mahadeva</i>	Mr Mike Briscoe	Chair and Director of LCT Board
<i>Mr Dennis Jones</i>	Mr David James	Non-Executive HR Director
<i>Mr Paul Bishton</i>	Mrs Bev Tyley	Non-Executive Finance Director
<i>Mr Mike Briscoe</i>	Dr. Gill Eatough	CEO
<i>Mr David James</i>	Mrs Christine Davies	Oversight safeguarding
Our Members define and champion the vision, ethos and strategy of the trust Maintain a clear understanding of the performance of the trust and schools Drive the strategy and outcomes for the trust Appoints trustees with the required skills, experience and capacity Removes trustees if required Receives annual accounts	Professor David Woods	Oversight school improvement
	Mr David Wootton	Oversight Governance
	Mr Nathan Wallis	Oversight audit and risk / PR
	Mr Graham Hutchinson	Oversight audit and risk
	Mr Andrew Harris	Oversight audit and risk

How we conduct ourselves

We believe our actions and behaviours should demonstrate good governance and probity and reflect the values of our Trust including the promotion of equality and diversity in all aspects of the board's governance and when carrying out any of our functions.

We have developed a Code of Conduct that Members, Trustees and Governors have agreed to accept, adopt and abide by.

In addition, all those involved in Governance and leadership of our Trust uphold the highly regarded 'Nolan principles':

- selflessness - take decisions solely based on the vision and values of the Trust
- integrity – not be compromised in carrying duties by outside organisations or personal interest
- objectivity – remain impartial and ensure choices are made on merit alone
- accountability – be responsible for decisions and actions
- openness – give reasons for actions wherever possible and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands
- honesty – declare any private interests and take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest
- leadership – promote these principles by example

Our code of conduct also embodies the good governance standard for public services, the standard prepared by The Independent Commission on Good Governance in Public Services in 2005, which comprises six core principles of good governance, each with its supporting principles.

Committee Structure

To manage the Trust effectively, the Board has two statutory committees, each has a scheme of delegation and reports into the Trust Board: -

<p>Business and Personnel Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is the key operational group of the Trust • Terms of reference are in place • The Committee reports formally to the Trustees • Finance is a specific responsibility of this Committee 	<p>This Committee meets frequently (weekly or fortnightly). As the Executive function develops, this Committee will move to monthly meetings</p>	<p>Membership: Chair of LCT – Mike Briscoe Director of Finance - Bev Tyley Director of HR – David James CEO – Gill Eatough Supported by: Chief Operating Officer – Paul Jones Head of Finance – Tracey Williams Company Secretary – Veronica Croft</p>
<p>Audit and Risk Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a scrutiny Committee that ensures compliance with Academy financial regulations • It maintains the Trust Risk register • Audit procedures and outcome are managed and reviewed • The Committee reports formally to the Trustees 	<p>This Committee meets three times a year. If circumstances require, the Committee will reconvene for specific reviews on behalf of Trustees</p>	<p>Membership: Trustee - Nathan Wallis Trustee - Graham Hutchinson Trustee - Andrew Harris Members of the Committee appoint the chair.</p>

At a local level, each of our Academies govern through their own Local Governing Body, operating as a (local) Committee of the Trust.

LCT – Key operational staff (September 2018)

The Trust is committed to ensuring that there is only a small core team of staff responsible for the day to day operation of the Trust. Demands upon and capacity of this core team will be monitored as the trust expands and we review trust services.

Name	Position	Key Functions
Gill Eatough	Chief Executive Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leads the Trust • Leads on the strategic development of LCT • Leads school improvement across the Trust Academies • Accountable to the Trust Board
Paul Jones	Chief Operating Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversees all LCT school buildings and estates to ensure the sites are safe, well maintained and provide the best possible environment for learning • Line manages all site teams • Supports the running of the company and Trust budget • Responsible for Health and Safety • Procurement of services and value for money • Deputises for CEO when required.
Veronica Croft	PA to CEO Company Secretary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PA to the EP and Company Secretary • Supports the Chair and Trust Directors • Distributes papers, attends and minutes Trust Board meetings and Trust committees • Overall administrative function for the Trust including oversight of HR • Updates Trust Website and ensures compliance
Tracey Williams	Head of Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leads the finance team for the Trust and finance officers in the Academies • Ensures compliance with financial regulations and Trust scheme of delegation • Works with EP/Principal/Headteachers on staffing, budget planning, forecasting for each Academy • Liaises with SAGE to ensure the system provides the service required to the Trust and Academies • Works with the Trust accountants to prepare for audit and EFSA returns. • Involved in procurement of Trust services and contracts

5. LCT Academies and brief context (as of October 2019)

Academy	Type of Academy Conversion date – joining LCT	NOR (PAN)	Age range	Ofsted Category Date of last inspection	LCT category October 2019
HLC Primary	Convertor 1 st March 2018	540 (540)	5-11	GOOD October 2012	GOOD
HLC Secondary	Convertor 1 st March 2018	960 (960)	11-16	GOOD October 2013	GOOD/OUTSTANDING
Queensway Special School (operates on two sites Queensway North specialist provision for autism and Queensway South specialist provision for SEMH)	North – Convertor 1 st March 2018	64 (60)	11-16 Y6 x 6	GOOD October 2013	GOOD +
	South - Sponsored 1 st March 2018	60 (54) Y6 x6 Y5 x 6	11-16 but Y5 and Y6	Requires Improvement July 2016	GOOD
Charlton Secondary School	Sponsored 1 st December 2019	1135 (1200)	11-16	Special Measures May 2015	GOOD -

Ercall Wood Academy	Convertor 1 st July 2018	900 (900)	11-16	Requires Improvement January 2016	REQUIRES IMPROVEMENT
Wrekin View Primary School	Convertor 1 st December 2019	420 (420)	5-11	Good November 2016	GOOD

6. Key Areas of Focus for the Trust

Our key objectives for each 3-year cycle are in our strategy document. To meet these objectives, the Trust has seven key areas of focus which drive the annual Trust Operational Plan, inform individual Raising Achievement Plans (RAPs) in each Academy and support external funding bids. This ensures consistent reporting and monitoring across the Trust and Academies. The areas are summarised below, more detail can be found in the annual Trust Operational Plan:

1. **Leadership** – we drive continuous improvement of leadership, at all levels, within our Academies, with the expectation of strongly “Good” with growing evidence of a high percentage of “Outstanding” leadership.
2. **Standards of Achievement** – we support and challenge our schools to focus on raising achievement for all our learners so that all key measures are rapidly improving to at least nationally expected standards with many schools achieving outstanding results, which are well above national standards.
3. **Teaching and Learning** – we pay unrelenting attention to classroom practice and pedagogy to ensure teaching is strongly “Good” with many areas of “Outstanding practice” so that our learners can achieve and make excellent progress in our schools.
4. **Pastoral care including Safeguarding** – we provide high standards of pastoral care and support of children and young people in all our schools so attendance and behaviour for learning is consistently “Good” or better with outstanding safeguarding practices.
5. **Community and parental engagement** – we develop our schools so that they are very popular, often oversubscribed and the first choice for parents in our community. Parents and the community have a clear understanding of and high satisfaction levels of the trust and the significant role it has in improving the quality of education across our area.
6. **Effective management and trust services** – we commit to ensuring the trust is well led and managed, rigorously held to account by the Trust Board, with effective services for our schools which provide value for money. Budget targets are met each year and the Trust has the financial capacity to support school improvement using the Trust Development Fund.
7. **Governance and quality assurance** – we ensure high quality Governance across the Trust which require that leaders are accountable, challenged and supported. The Trust has effective quality assurance processes in place and an annual programme of external reviews that affirm its effectiveness.

7. LCT Strategic Development – how we manage the next steps

Growth - Our vision is to grow the trust carefully and with a clear understanding of opportunity, risks and impact for learners and our communities before new schools join us. A number of local primary schools that already work in close partnership with our three secondary schools are talking with us, we are very positive about establishing a network of primaries. The Trust now has two large primary schools who are key feeder schools to our secondary academies, we are already seeing the benefit of close working and collaboration between these two schools. We also wish to ensure we can offer support to all learners and we will consider schools from beyond our immediate locality, however our priority is to build a strong, local Trust in the first instance. Any consideration of schools joining the Trust will be carefully managed with appropriate, manageable timescales and robust due diligence processes.

Capacity- We are very clear that any growth needs to be carefully planned to ensure our systems and processes are well embedded and there is sufficient capacity within the Trust to support all our schools and learners. As well as considering requests from schools wishing to join our Trust, we will also look positively at managing community needs and capacity for learners through consideration of capital development needs and changes to pupil admission numbers (PANs).

Partnerships – The Trust already has significant partnerships in place with local and regional MATS; Teaching Schools; RSC; DfE, Telford College and the LA. We will continue to develop these and new partnerships to ensure we are an outward facing organisation with an outstanding network locally, regionally and nationally.

Leadership development and succession – We are committed to outstanding professional development and growing the leaders of tomorrow in our schools, hence we are providing mechanisms for staff to work creatively and innovatively. Recruitment and retention of staff is critical and we will work hard to ensure our Trust is seen as a high-performing employer known also for identifying and developing potential leaders.

Alternative provision – There is a significant need across our trust to research and pilot a better provision for young people in the locale. In particular for those who struggle to engage in school because their behaviour means they are at risk of permanent exclusion or those who have significant mental health issues which makes it almost impossible for them to engage in the school system. Both these groups are at risk of leaving school with poor qualifications and as potential NEETS, the Trust will look at planning and securing high quality alternatives for these students as well as increased support for those who are disadvantaged within our locale.

Funding – We are determined to ensure our Academies and the Executive apply best and robust financial processes to get the best from available funds. We will also seek to support schools with additional funding to develop new and innovative projects which enhance learning and drive up standards, we will make every effort to successfully attract further investment in our schools.

Community and culture – We believe that our Academies and the Trust have a serious and critical role to play in our communities. We are already providing fantastic opportunities for staff and learners to work together across the Trust. This work is really developing and we have already established a wide range of collaborative projects such as a Dance Festival, The Big Sing, LCT Rugby Team, a Trust residential Outdoor Pursuits week, the Trust Banquet to name a few. We will continue to build on high levels of enrichment in each academy but also increased opportunity from across the Trust for our young people to work and learn together.

Contact details:

If you would like further information on the Learning Community Trust we would be delighted to hear from you so please contact Dr. Gill Eatough, CEO by email: gill.eatough@lct.education or telephone: 01952 387010.

