



Learning together to be the best we can be

5 YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

2020—2025



Caring
Nurturing
Child-Centred Family-Focused
Encouraging Enriching
Empowering Passionate
Inclusive

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Foreword

Nexus Multi Academy Trust was founded in 2016 and has the highest of ambitions for anyone and everyone we work with - our pupils, families, workforce and partners.

Since our creation in 2016, the Trust has been on a journey of continual growth and improvement.

Founded by three special schools in the borough of Rotherham, Nexus MAT now operates across South Yorkshire, with a mix of special and mainstream academies.

Since creating the MAT, our growth and developments have been underpinned by the resonance of our values with those schools who have sought to join our family. Our values have remained at the heart of all the decisions we've taken, as we have maintained a relentless focus on being:

Inclusive; Child Centred; Family Focused; Caring; Passionate; Nurturing; Encouraging; Enriching and Empowering.

We bring these high expectations to everything we do, they are embedded in our culture and our delivery and we are really excited to work with partners who share this ethos.

We have a strong belief in the value of lifelong learning. Our staff are the best resource we have and it is our privilege to be involved with such courageous, committed and child centred individuals. It is with and through them that we will make our vision a reality.

Welcome to our second 5 Year Strategic Plan.

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Nexus MAT Board of Directors



Vision & Values

The **vision** for Nexus is that we are constantly **Learning together, to be the best we can be.**

This vision is what we aspire to and is as relatable to every employee and partner of our Trust as it is to our children, young adults and their families. In order to achieve our vision, we have the following **mission statement**:

- **Our learners and their families are at the centre of what we do;**
- **Our employees and partners are passionate about being the best that they can be;**
- **Our Trust is relentlessly focused on improvement.**

Underpinning our vision and mission statement are our **core values**:



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Given the growth of the Trust - since the vision, values and mission statement were first formulated and introduced in 2016 - the Trust utilised an Employee Opinion Survey in the spring of 2020 to consult on the above with all employees across the 9 constituent academies of the Trust at this time

Feedback overwhelmingly supported the continued use of these and validated their resonance with the Trust and its academies.

We will continually and systematically engage with our school communities and with our workforce - through the work of our academies, central Team and external audit - so that we can measure our effectiveness at "walking the talk" of our vision, values and mission statement.

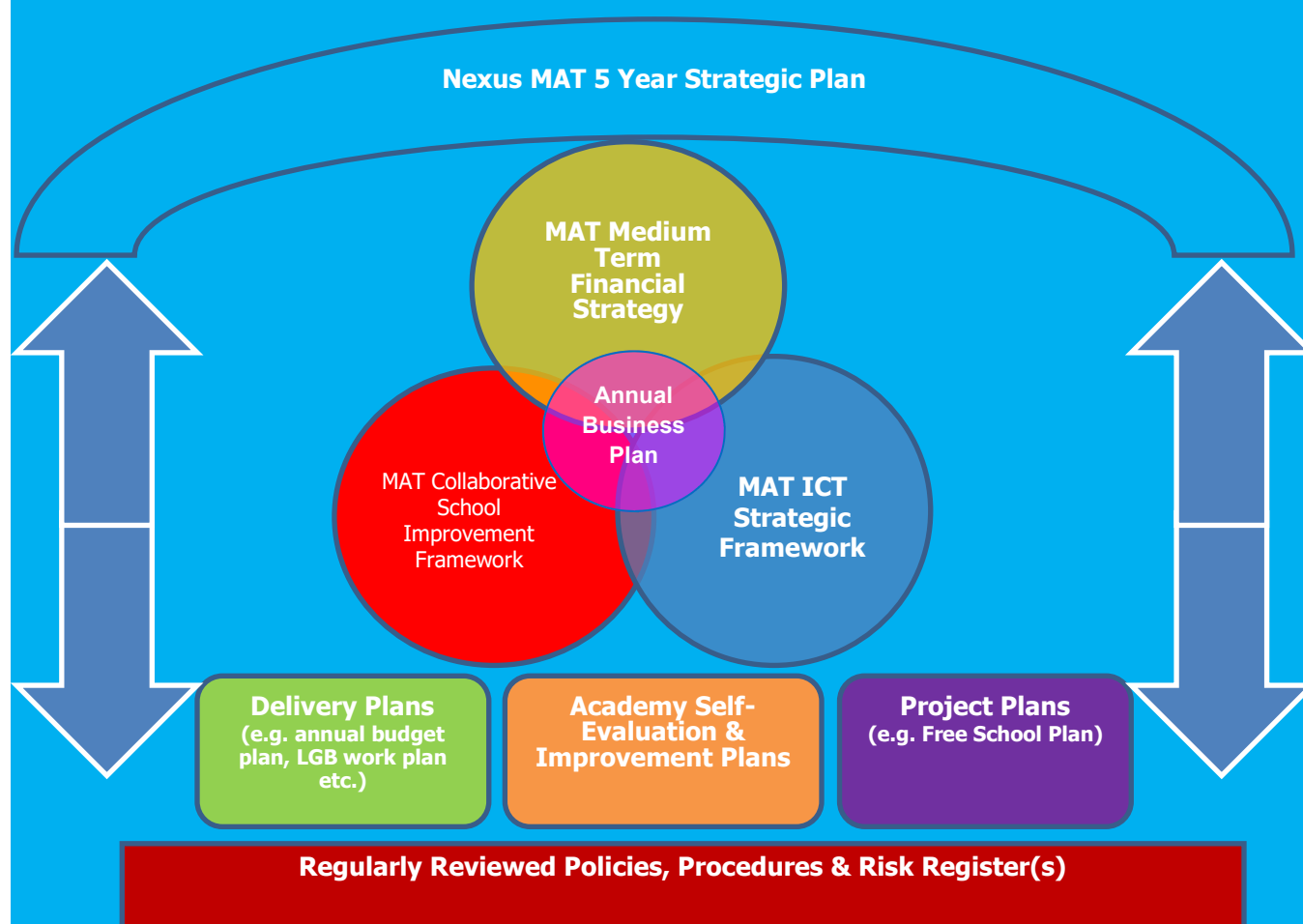
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Strategic Objectives

The Nexus MAT Board have agreed three key strategic business objectives for Nexus which will steer our growth and development over the next 5 years. These are:

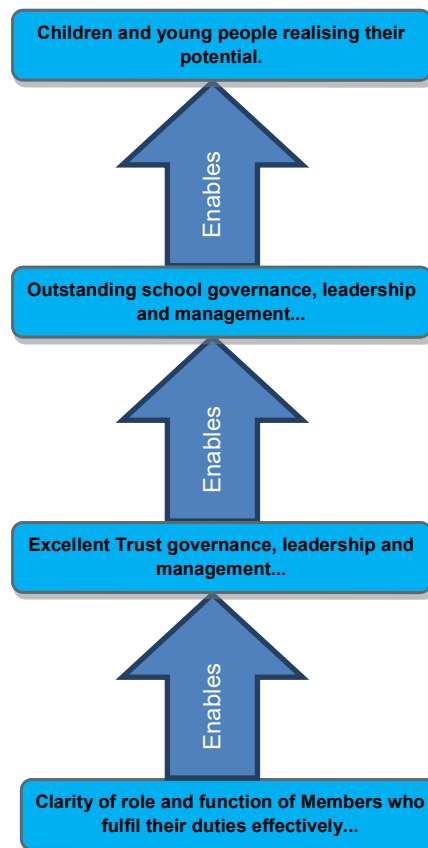
- **Increasing quality of provision in our education system;**
- **Developing partnerships to better meet need;**
- **Maintaining a financially viable, sustainable and ethically driven Multi Academy Trust**

We have a range of strategies which link to our 5 Year Strategic Plan, as per the following:



Leading Continual Improvement

Nexus MAT was founded on the belief that our academies should be focused on supporting a child and families as best they can, with the Trust adopting an ethical leadership philosophy to enable this.



Whilst leaders embody the principles of ethical leadership in their behaviour and decision making, we also recognise that there are a range of non negotiables that we must meet as minimum standards. Be these defined by the Government or by ourselves, we have the highest standards for the outcomes we will achieve, and we remain restless in our pursuit of excellence for our pupils, our staff and the communities we serve.

The Trust has made a strategic commitment through the first 5 years of its existence to invest in creating the capacity to meet the high standards we set for ourselves whilst meeting the increased demands generated by growth.

External scrutiny and review reflects the positive impact the Trust has made in all its academies, and in conjunction with the publication of this second 5 year plan the Trust has made further strategic investment to frontload capacity at Trust and individual academy level, to both drive improvements in our own schools and ensure we have the means to support others - be that through school to school support, engagement in strategic partnerships and networks, or through further growth in our Trust.

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Strategic Objective 1: Increasing quality of provision in our education system

Why is it important?	
<p>The purpose of any MAT is to improve the quality of children's education. Since their creation in 2010, academies have been through many changes in terms of regulation and scrutiny, and since 2019 there has been an emerging trend of MATs taking on a more clearly defined role as a new civic structure. We welcome this thinking and see this strategic objective as one not solely limited to the academies in our Trust, but to the education system as a whole—locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.</p>	
How will we meet this objective?	
<p>The Trust Collaborative School Improvement Framework will detail how we will meet the central aims of this objective, in conjunction with the MAT Strategic Asset Plan. We will work in open partnership with our academies and our partners to ensure we never compromise on our 'quality first' commitment, drawing on clear evidence and being appreciative in our enquiry.</p>	
Success Criteria Years 1 - 2	Success Criteria Years 3 - 5
Successful delivery of the MAT Improvement Plan, which is developed annually in line with the Collaborative School Improvement Framework.	MAT Collaborative School Improvement Framework connects—and adds value - to all Academies' School Improvement plans.
The Trust has an accurate means of self-assessing its overall effectiveness and the effectiveness of its constituent academies against clearly defined Key Performance Indicators.	Key Performance Indicators evolve over time to reflect the changing nature of the external regulatory environment and the changed priorities of the Trust.
The Trust has sponsored at least one Inadequate or Requires Improvement school within an 18 month period, where the opportunity arises.	<p>The Trust continues to sponsor 1 inadequate or RI school in an 18 month period, where the opportunity arises.</p> <p>The Trust has improved provision in sponsored academies by 2025 and self assessment is demonstrating upward trajectory against the Ofsted framework grades.</p>
The Trust has a strategic asset plan in place which details how the estate will be developed and improved.	The Strategic Asset Plan is delivered successfully.
The Trust works in partnership with other schools, Trusts and local authorities to establish new models of supporting learners to be the best they can be.	Existing satellites/hubs grow safely and securely to meet emergent need, with further hubs created in line with increased demand.
There is a reduction on financial and competent person audit recommendations year-on-year, with more rapid compliance from newly converting academies within their first 12 months of conversion.	There is consistency of practice across all academies in the MAT with audit improvements fully embedded and systematically adopted where new areas for improvement emerge.

Strategic Objective 2: Developing partnerships to better meet need

Why is it important?	
<p>As a clear sighted values driven MAT, the growth of the Trust can only be affected by aligning with schools that have the same values and ethos we have. This comes from working in open, collaborative partnership with others first, with conversion coming as a natural progression of this way of working. Equally, our capacity to better meet need cannot and should not be defined solely by the growth of the Trust, as we believe it is essential to work with others - regardless of whether they choose, or can choose, to academise. Our focus is therefore on a broader horizon than merely developing partnerships to increase the number of academies in our MAT. In this regard, we believe we are actively seeking to fulfil the moral and legal obligations on us as per the Objects in our Articles of Association.</p>	
How will we meet this objective?	
<p>The Trust will build on the existing partnerships already established to widen our participation in sector improvement activity. We will continue to engage in strategic board and partnership forums to identify opportunities for co-production and growth. Our existing and new academies will continue to place a high value in developing their own partnerships which further their local improvement objectives, connecting into the work of the wider MAT wherever a mutually beneficial outcome can be secured.</p>	
Success Criteria Years 1 - 2	Success Criteria Years 3 - 5
The Trust is working with a range of other MATs and maintained schools to establish partnerships which lead to demonstrable changes in provision, and has incorporated a further 2 schools into the MAT.	Clear terms of engagement with other MATs and maintained schools are in place and, where possible, partnerships have extended beyond their original configuration to widen the scope of networks and impact positively on more communities. Further 2 schools have joined the MAT.
The Trust is an established strategic partner of a Teaching School Hub in the region and is actively engaged in strategic developments to affect the wider education landscape.	The Trust is working with Teaching School Hub networks outside of the immediate region and is actively contributing to region wide school improvement initiatives.
The Trust has secured a continuation of its current extended schools contract and has continued its upward trajectory of user engagement.	The Trust has developed a sustainable extended schools offer with an identified charity partner that is not dependent solely on local authority contracting and has a remit to meet the needs of those children and families most in need, in the South Yorkshire region, as defined by the Trust and its charity partner.
The Trust has continued growth of the Landmarks/Nexus partnership offer for post 19 in Rotherham, with pilot provision planned in one other locality area in South Yorkshire.	The Nexus/Landmarks partnerships has evolved to meet need across South Yorkshire, with all 4 local authorities commissioning provision for young adults.
The Trust is actively engaged in the strategic planning for improved provision with the 4 South Yorkshire local authorities to better meet local need. At least 1 new school is in pre-opening.	The Trust is actively delivering a differentiated model of direct provision and/or satellite support for schools across the region, and a further 1 –2 free schools are in the pre-opening process.



Strategic Objective 3: Maintaining a financially viable, sustainable and ethically driven Multi Academy Trust

Why is it important?	
<p>Strategy, governance and resource management are the cornerstones of a high functioning organisation. As a public authority which is a private limited company with exempt charity status, it is essential - and a legal requirement - that a Multi Academy Trust can demonstrate value for money; regularity and propriety. However, it is equally important that every decision we take is ethical, so that we never deviate from the values we espouse.</p>	
How will we meet this objective?	
<p>The Trust's Medium Term Financial Strategy will be the guiding document for ensuring compliance with ESFA requirements and driving the scrutiny, challenge and support that will deliver value for money and liquidity across the MAT. The Collaborative School Improvement Framework will in turn inform the creation of greater efficiencies in practice, whilst the MAT's Strategic Asset Plan will ensure we optimise opportunities to improve the value of our estate.</p>	
Success Criteria Years 1 - 2	Success Criteria Years 3 - 5
The Trust forecasts financial health in the Medium Term Financial Strategy with a cash reserves level within the % thresholds set.	The Trust is utilising retained revenue on invest-to-grow projects with our academies, enriching the educational offer in a financial sustainable way. Growth of the Trust has allowed for the partnership contribution of 5% to be rationalised further, with either more services offered or a % reduction achieved.
High cost service areas have been subject to a Trust wide procurement review to test value for money in light of increased economies of scale as a consequence of Trust growth.	All areas of procurement have been reviewed with clear Trust-led value for money assessments in place.
ESFA toolkits such as ICFP and SRMSA are systematically utilised to inform academy budget planning and re-profiling.	ESFA toolkits such as ICFP and SRMSA have led to cross-Trust workforce and business process redesign to drive down costs and secure greater economies of scale, in line with Trust growth.
The Trust has rolled out the ethical leadership model across leaders and governors and is embedding this into the whole way we do business.	Ethical leadership principles are intrinsically linked to the way we do business and drive the Trust's business planning and delivery, through the partnerships and networks we have developed.
The Trust has continued to secure Condition Improvement Funding and other grant funds to improve the estate.	The growth of the Trust secures an annual CIF award for the Trust to utilise strategically to improve the MAT estate.



The Academies Financial Handbook is published by the Education & Skills Funding Agency to outline the legal duties on all Multi Academy Trusts. The Handbook also details the legal duties on the statutory roles required in every MAT: the Chief Executive Officer ("accounting officer") and the Chief Finance Officer. The standards expected of all public services are set out in the Treasury's 'Managing Public Money' document.

These standards are: honesty, impartiality, openness, accountability, accuracy, fairness, integrity, transparency, objectivity and reliability carried out in the spirit of, as well as to the letter of, the law in the public interest to high ethical standards achieving value for money.

The Chief Executive Officer must be able to assure Parliament, and the public, of high standards of probity in the management of public funds, particularly:

- **Value for money**
- **Regularity**
- **Propriety**

The Chief Executive Officer must complete and sign a statement of compliance in these 3 areas each year and submit this to the Education Funding Agency with the audited accounts of the Trust.

Value for money is a key concept. It means securing the best mix of quality and effectiveness for the least outlay over the period of use of the goods or services bought. It is not about minimising up front prices. Whether in conventional procurement, market testing, private finance or some other form of public private partnership, finding value for money involves an appropriate allocation of risk.

As we continue to grow, we will adapt our financial planning to ensure we continue to use our expanding resources in an affordable and sustainable manner, and we will carry out procurement and project appraisal objectively and fairly, using cost benefit analysis and generally seeking good value for the Exchequer as a whole.

We will use management information systems to provide assurance about value for money and the quality of delivery in conjunction with DfE guidance such as the Integrated Curriculum and Financial Planning toolkit.

Openness and transparency are at the heart of effective governance and the Trust has a clear standard of expectation for the reporting from officers to Directors and local governance. More details can be found in our published Scheme of Delegation.



Audit, Plan, Do, Review

Our 5 year strategic plan will be translated on an annual basis into our strategic business plan, which will be approved by the Board of Directors.

Within the annual strategic business plan, we will map how our vision, mission statement and values are informing the priorities in our Collaborative School Improvement Framework. We will then outline our aspirations for each academic year, as we seek to realise the:

- Three aims of our mission statement;
- Three strategic objectives for our Trust
- Three priorities within our Collaborative School Improvement Framework;



We will draw on the principles of strategic commissioning in our management of Trust business: having a clear understanding of the need we're meeting; consulting in the development of our business plans; reaching the point of delivery as soon as is reasonably possible; and learning from both our success and our mistakes.

Managing Risk

Risk is an every day part of life: it cannot be avoided entirely, only mitigated. Having effective governance in place at all levels in our Trust will ensure that we have clear insight of - and mitigation steps to address - the risks we face.

Effective governance is systemic in Nexus MAT. The standards we measure ourselves against are informed by the statutory guidance we must comply with, and outlined in our policies and procedures. We have forward plans which structure the governance work of our Members, Directors and local governors. Expertise is sourced to enhance our capacity to analyse and understand risk. Executive and senior leaders adopt behaviours which create an atmosphere of openness and transparency with our workforce and the families we serve.

All of these are levers in how we recognise, analyse and mitigate risks. Our risk register therefore reflects this strategic, mature understanding of risk management.

Our Partnerships

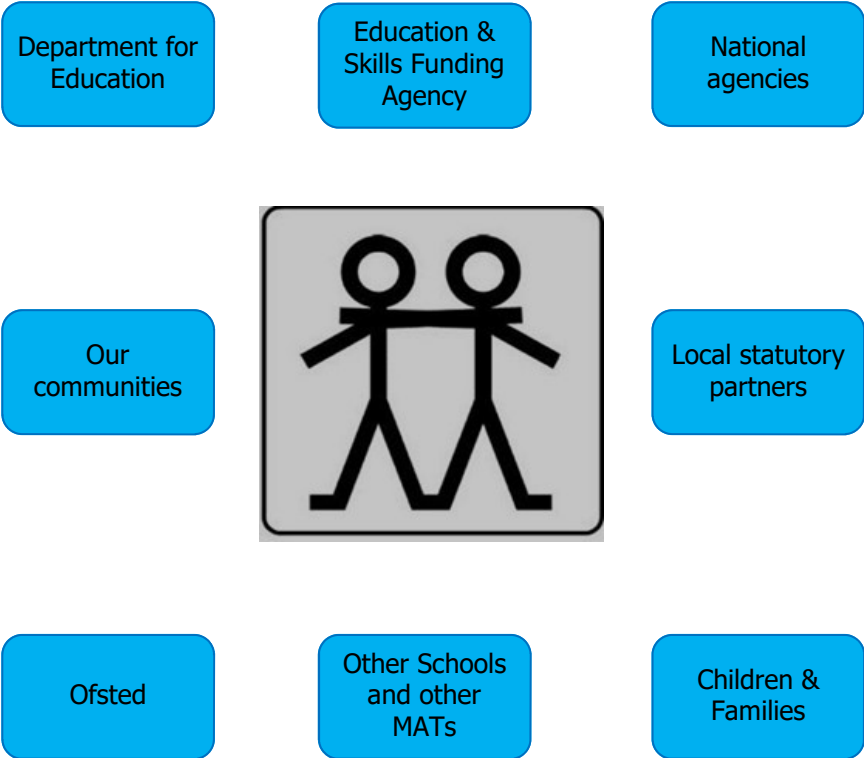
No school can exist in isolation, and no Multi Academy Trust can thrive without having a wide range of partners.

Families; social care and other children’s and adult services; statutory agencies; employers and other schools and settings: our partnerships help us improve ourselves as much as they can allow us to influence others and help secure the best offer for children.

As the Trust grows and develops, so our partnerships will expand.

We are a Trust that values partnerships, something that requires balance between, and empowerment of, all parties.

Our partnerships aren’t conditional on being a part of our Trust; the only condition is that partnership work has a positive impact on the lives of children and families. In this spirit, we are open to any and all conversations with schools, organisations and individuals who want to work with us. Whether that’s about a school joining the Trust; working with us collectively; or working with a school or a child individually.



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Equality & Diversity

Since the Equality Act 2010 came into effect in April 2011 it is good practice for each school to make a statement about the principles according to which it reviews the impact on equalities of its policies and practices, and according to which it fulfils the specific duties to publish information and evidence, and to decide on specific and measurable objectives.

As a Trust we welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations in relation to age, disability, ethnicity, gender (including issues of transgender, and of maternity and pregnancy), religion and belief, and sexual identity. We welcome our duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion. We recognise that these duties reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.



Nexus Multi Academy Trust. A Private Ltd Company. Registered in England & Wales. Company Number: 10075893.

Registered Office: Maltby Hilltop School, Larch Road, Maltby, Rotherham, S. Yorks, England, S66 8AZ. A charitable company.

www.NexusMAT.org