



Collaborative School  
Improvement Framework  
Updated Sept 2021

# 1. INTENT

School improvement is the core business of Nexus Multi Academy Trust. As the responsible maintaining authority for our academies, Nexus MAT has a duty to ensure that all of our schools are in a state of continual improvement. We deliver this through our belief that local leadership and governance can best determine a school's improvement priorities, within a wider accountability framework that ensures this is being executed successfully and at the required pace.

The MAT improvement team is comprised of the Headteachers from each Academy and any associate schools; the Trust CEO and Central Trust Officers. The work is co-ordinated, facilitated and evaluated by the Assistant CEO - School Improvement and reported to the Standards Committee, which supports and challenges developing Trust practice. Our "Foundations for School Improvement" are based upon seven core principles, inspired by the work of [Forum Strategy](#):



At Multi Academy Trust level, we have defined our “Big 3” improvement priorities, which are the three strategic priorities for school improvement that we expect to see constantly tested and challenged in all our academies. These “Big 3” fall under the Trust’s overarching strategic business objective of “Increasing quality of provision in our education system”, and are as follows:

### **Increasing quality of provision in our education system**

1. All our children and young people enjoy their learning, thrive and realise their potential.

2. All our children and young people are responsible citizens who actively contribute to society.

3. All our academies are continually improving the quality of our provision.

These have been determined because we believe they are the three statements that give us the clearest line-of-sight on the quality of teaching and learning in our academies. We have developed a High Level Dashboard, which helps the Trust Board to manage our performance through reviewing a range of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), which fall out of the Big 3. Many of the KPIs in the Dashboard mirror the Indicators of Success as outlined in our strategic objectives.



## Vision & Values

Our vision is that we are constantly **"Learning together; to be the best we can be."**

This vision is what Nexus aspires 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. These have been defined by our workforce and governors and resonate with the values that all partners of Nexus MAT hold.

We believe it is really important and that we are, in all the things we plan and do: **Inclusive; Child Centred; Family Focused; Caring; Passionate; Nurturing; Encouraging Enriching; Empowering.**

We bring these high expectations to everything we do, and we are excited to work with partners who share this ethos.

The vision and mission define our goals and our values are intrinsic to our work and the measure of our success.



A green trapezoidal graphic with a white border, containing the text 'Collective Commitment' in white.

## Collective Commitment

Our Improvement Framework is developed around the principles of collective efficacy with the Trust instilling a culture where:

- Schools are provided with opportunities to participate in important Trust-wide decisions including identifying improvement priorities;
- Networks of staff across our schools agree goals which have a direct and measurable impact on positive pupil outcomes;

- Teachers can get out of their classrooms and gain insight into best practice and learning from one another through professional conversations;
- Discussions and debates are used to reach consensus about fundamental educational issues;
- We have responsive leaders who show concern and respect for their staff and protect teachers from issues that detract from their teaching time and focus.

The Trust promotes Ethical Leadership in all aspects of its' work and is a member of the Ethical Leadership Pathfinder Project<sup>1</sup>

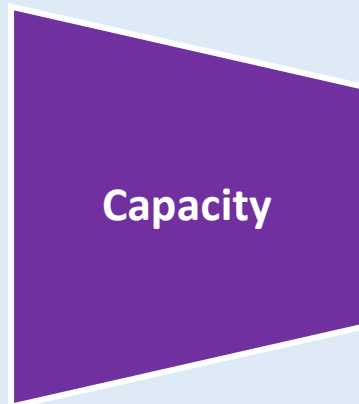
We are committed to this project as we agree with its values and virtues and that:

- Schools are where society looks after its young until they are old enough to assume the mantle of adult responsibility;
- School leaders have to be diligent and trusted professionals and public servants;
- Every decision and judgement school leaders make sets an example to children and should promote ethical behaviour in succeeding generations: how we do things is as important as what we do;
- In a landscape where schools are of many different sorts and responsible to many different people, society must be

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nga.org.uk/ethicalleadership.aspx>

able to rely thousands of individual decision-making leaders to do the right thing, themselves.



## Capacity

Within our workforce we recognise that we have a wide range of specialisms and expertise in an eclectic range of areas. Some are known through being Specialist Leaders in Education (SLE), however; we also recognise staff who, in their day to day work, demonstrate skill, knowledge and understanding in the absence of a formal designation such as SLE.

All Headteachers are able to contribute to identifying Trust wide improvement priorities and also to identify staff within their schools who have the knowledge, skills and motivation to lead or participate in developing these. We endeavour to have a strong understanding of where specific expertise exists across the MAT

and how it can be used to support other schools, and develop system leaders alongside key partners.

We aim to achieve this through adopting carefully considered approaches to using system leaders and lead practitioners, promoting knowledge transfer through coaching, modelling and enquiry led learning.

'Learning together to be the best we can be' means that we remain outward looking, seeking to learn with and from others; developing partnerships with Teaching School Hubs and other Multi Academy Trusts. A key underpinning of any learning culture is having a licence to try and fail. Whilst we must always be clear about our accountabilities to our learners and our communities, we must also accept that failure is something that enables learning, and having a culture where this is accepted is a cornerstone of enabling a learning culture.

As part of our school improvement covenant, The Trust makes a commitment to all its academies to invest in improvement activity that delivers system change across the organisation. In return, the Trust has agreed expectations for how this is resourced:

- A. All Nexus Headteachers are part of the Trust's Strategic Leadership team, and make a commitment to actively contribute to the MAT improvement priorities and be equally mindful of the whole as well as their individual school needs;

- B.** All Nexus Headteachers (or one of their senior leadership team) commit to at least 2 days per term to undertake Trust school improvement activity;
- C.** All Nexus academies are part of one Trust estate, which can be made available for use by the Trust and other schools within the MAT without cost, unless additional costs are incurred (e.g. refreshments);
- D.** All employees will be supported to engage in Trust networking events as part of our commitment to continuing professional development;
- E.** Where the Trust seeks to utilise a school leader or employee to support MAT improvement activity, there will be no financial loss for any school in supporting this and all commissions will be agreed with and through the Headteacher, at cost;
- F.** Whilst each academy has its own vision and mission statement unique to its context, all academies commit to the Trust vision, mission statement and values and will actively engage in initiatives which realise these;
- G.** Ethical leadership and collective efficacy underpin our behaviours as leaders and employees and are the standards we are all held to in all we do.



## 2. IMPLEMENTATION

### Intelligence Gathering

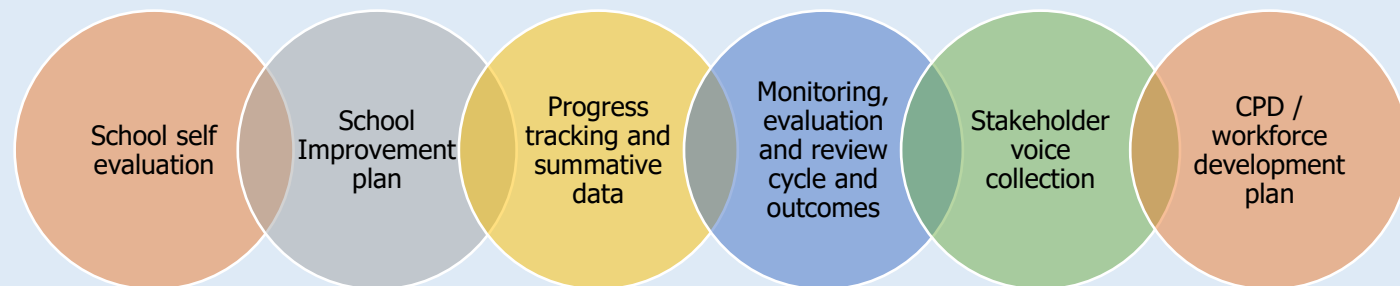
Our improvement model is based upon collaboration where individual School Leaders work together to address common issues and themes borne out of intelligence, information and data.

Each school conducts their own school improvement processes and Quality Assurance activity which is augmented by a challenge and support process commissioned by the Assistant CEO. This provides a wealth of information and data which can then be collated to gain a Trust Wide view and inform future priorities. We expect that schools will be open and transparent in sharing their data with the Assistant CEO - School Improvement, CEO and the Headteacher group.

The Headteacher group are continually reviewing where elements of intelligence gathering can be aligned, standardised or remain autonomous.

### Shared processes

The information which we expect schools to hold and share with Governors and the Trust Strategic Leadership Team includes (but may not be limited to):



Each academy is able to transfer this information to an evolving performance dashboard. This information can then be collated to ensure that Local Governors, Directors, the Executive and the Department for Education have a clear oversight of the quality of provision at a local level. This includes defined key performance indicators which overlays a school's self-evaluation and informs the common MAT improvement priorities and planning.

The Trust also utilises DfE models, such as the Integrated Curriculum and Financial Planning (ICFP) and the School Resource Management Self Assessment toolkits to structure resource allocation at the point of budget setting.

## Improvement activity

Whilst it is essential we know how our academies are delivering against the expectations of Government (as articulated and inspected by Ofsted), we are also really clear that we must express what is important to our MAT community so that we can evidence how and why being part of Nexus Multi Academy Trust has made a positive impact on the lives of the children and families we serve. That is why we developed our **big 3**.

In order to offer support and challenge to our academies in a meaningful and helpful way, it is important that the Trust seeks to understand the priorities within each of the academies and collectively across the Trust. This collation of priorities ensures that Trust-wide improvement work enables the principles of efficacy and collaboration.



In addition to priorities collated from all schools, the Trust also takes account of local and national priorities when planning improvement activity and the Central team along with School Senior Leaders are members of networks and partnerships.

The identified areas of collaborative work are identified below. Each area of work is led by one of the Headteachers or delegated to a member of the workforce with particular specialism or expertise.

<b>Trust collated priorities and common themes 2021-2022</b>		
<b>1. All our children and young people enjoy their learning and make at least good progress.</b>	<b>2. All our children are responsible citizens who make an active contribution to society.</b>	<b>3. All our Academies are continually improving our quality of provision</b>
<b>Reading and Phonics</b>	<b>Careers, transition</b>	<b>Research</b>
<b>Assessment and data reporting Curriculum</b>	<b>Travel training and life skills</b>	<b>Quality Assurance</b>
<b>Communication and Oracy</b>	<b>Pupil Voice and agency</b>	<b>Continuous Professional Learning and Development Offer</b>
<b>Safeguarding</b>	<b>Learning Environments</b>	<b>Early Career Teachers</b>
<b>Moderation</b>	<b>Family Support</b>	<b>Eco schools and sustainability</b>
<b>EYFS</b>	<b>Digital and Augmented Assistive Technology</b>	<b>Mental Health and Wellbeing</b>
<b>Governance</b>		

These collated priorities are identified within the Collaborative School's Improvement Framework delivery plan, which outlines what we will achieve; how we will do it; why it's important; and how we will know we've been successful: all framed around the "Big 3":

1. All our children and young people enjoy their learning and make at least good progress.
2. All our children are responsible citizens who make an active contribution to society.
3. All our Academies are continually improving our quality of provision

Annually we will publish a delivery plan consisting of measurable actions for each of the above priorities highlighted under the "Big 3". The detail will include:

- What we will achieve;
- How we will do it;
- Measurable outcomes.

The delivery plan is submitted to Directors for approval at the beginning of each academic year. Progress is reported on a termly basis to the Standards Committee of the Trust Board.



### 3. IMPACT

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#### Quality assurance & quality improvement

Quality assurance within Nexus Multi Academy Trust involves the systematic review of programmes, systems and processes to maintain and improve quality, equity and efficiency to improve teaching and learning – with the ultimate goal to support the best outcomes for learners. Our quality assurance approaches include mechanisms that are external and internal to schools and the MAT. External mechanisms may include peer reviews with other MATS or externally sourced audits or review. Internal mechanisms may include school self-evaluation, staff appraisal and classroom-based student assessments. These mechanisms have different but complementary purposes. They are part of a coherent,

integrated system, with the different mechanisms supporting and reinforcing each other. This kind of productive synergy maintains a clear focus on school development.

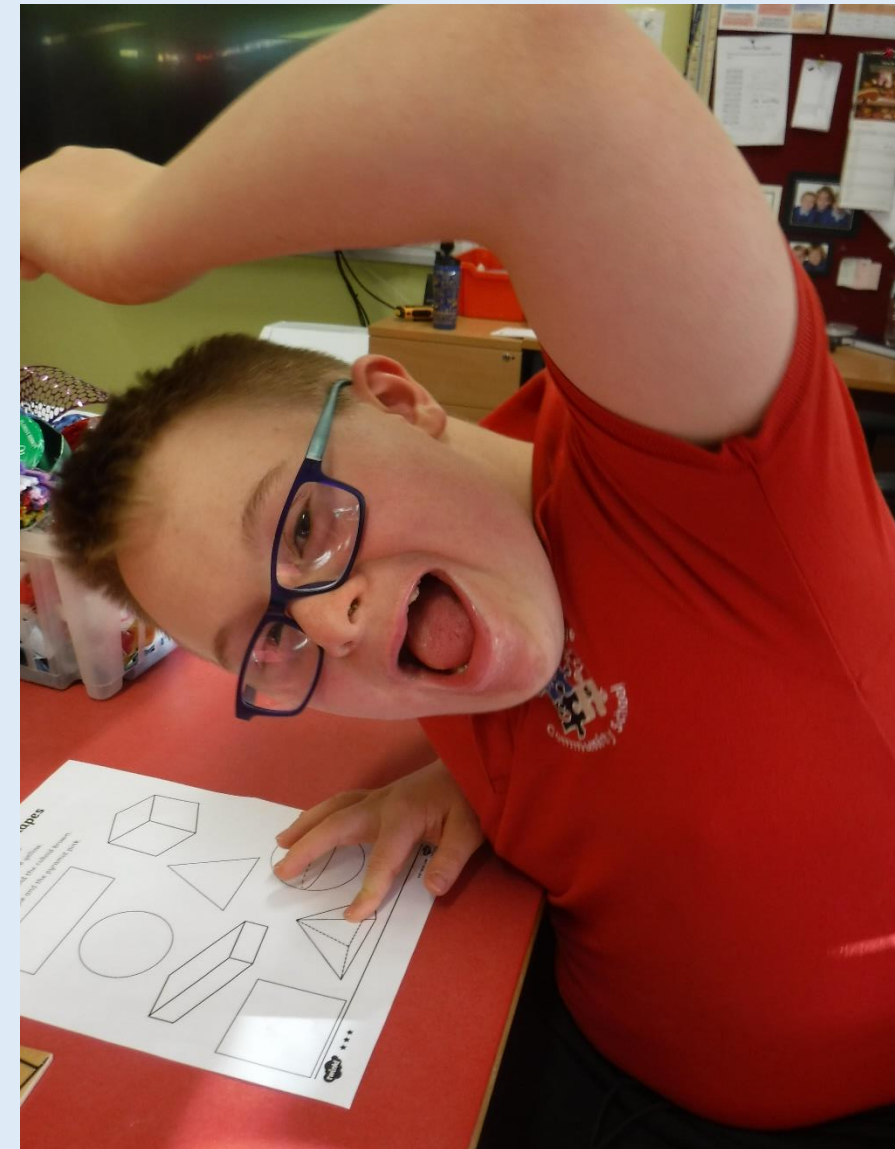
Quality assurance is important for accountability as well as to support ongoing development of schools and of teaching and learning which supports and challenges schools to adapt to the changing needs of our pupils. The focus is on not only improvement but also innovation and research that can then be shared for the benefit of all learners.

In a school improvement model based upon the principles of collective efficacy it is important that we use peer review/research to learn from one another and to test our thinking, including creating partnerships with other MATs or groups of schools. In order to facilitate this, we will continue to pursue the following activities:

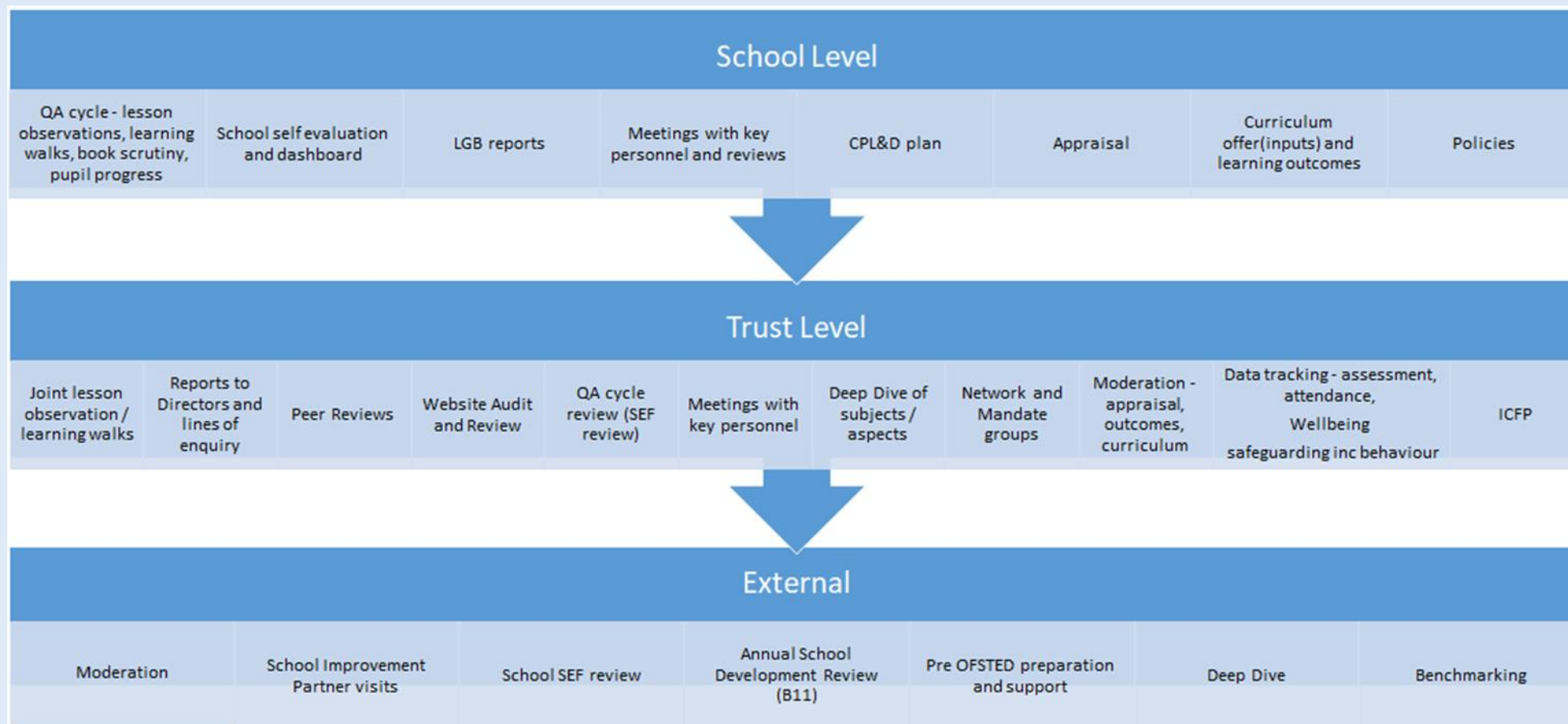
- Trust and school leaders meet regularly to discuss and systematically cover the different aspects of school performance and improvement with a clear agenda so that everyone comes ready for a focused conversation that helps drive improvement for all;
- Trust and school leaders regularly visit schools and classrooms together (e.g. for joint learning walks,

- lesson observations) so that they develop a shared picture of their schools;
- Gathering parent, staff and pupil feedback as an integral part of assessing schools' performance and progress;
  - Implementing a formal quality assurance model – which includes peer review and research - enabling school leaders to identify their own development needs from their improvement plans and self-evaluations;
  - Deploying staff across the MAT, based on their expertise, where this meets the needs of all parties.
  - Developing an infrastructure and networks to support shared professional learning and development – e.g. through subject networks, peer-to-peer coaching and observations and reflections on classroom practice linked to the MAT's priorities;
  - Promoting practice-based learning and research that are focused on areas likely to make the biggest impact on the MAT's priorities;
  - Sharing practice and research using an on-line platform – Synergy;
  - Developing and implementing a Data strategy that gives the Trust, governors, school leaders and staff access to data when they need it during the year;
  - A mechanism for sharing Data across the MAT through sourcing a single Management Information System (MIS) to allow easy analysis of data;

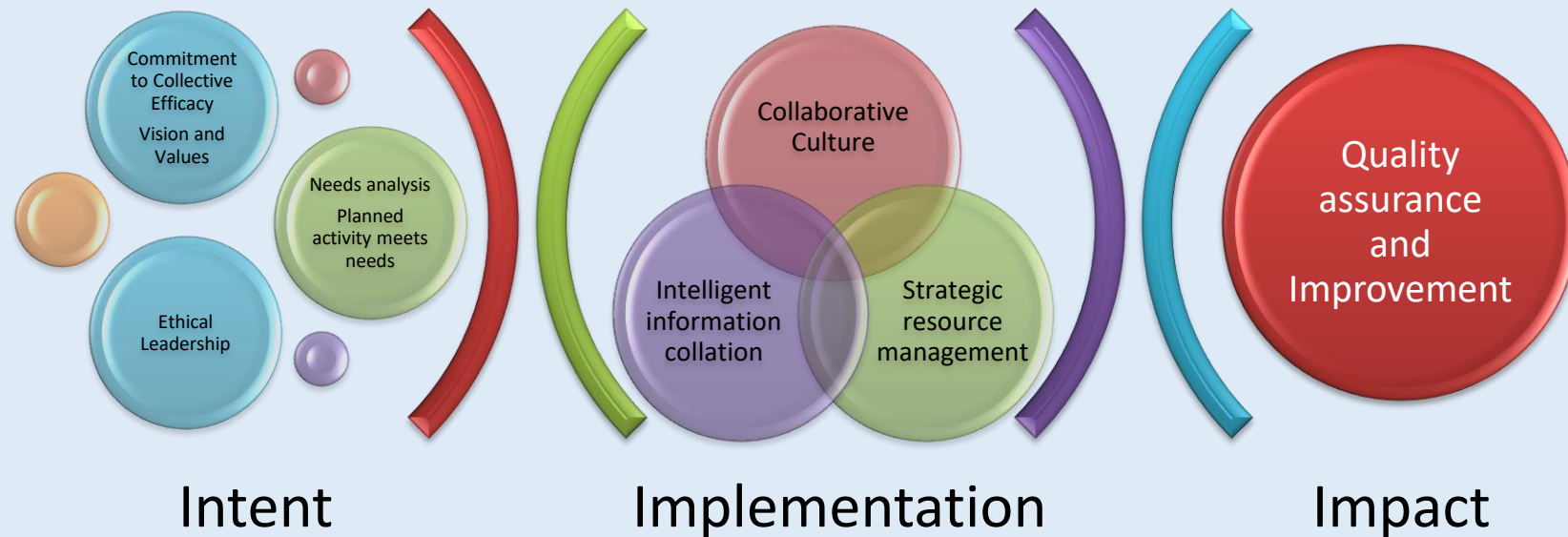
- Ensuring that school improvement is a core part of the cycle of business of Trust governance with a strong culture of scrutiny and challenge around school improvement at all levels.



Whilst it will continue to evolve to respond to the changing structure and needs of the MAT, the following is an example of the Trust's Quality Assurance activity.



A summary of our School Improvement model is as follows:



This framework will be accompanied by an annual MAT Delivery Plan, which will be approved and monitored by the Trust Standards Committee, in conjunction with the "local" overview and scrutiny function of the local governing bodies.

