

The Active Learning Trust Limited

Business Plan 2017/18 to 2019/20

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Gary Peile

The *Active Learning* Trust

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The Active Learning Trust

1. Executive Summary

The Active Learning Trust (ALT) exists to enable all pupils in its schools to achieve to the best of their ability in all that they do. In order to do this the Trust is an approved multi Academy sponsor (with the relevant Multi Academy Funding Agreement in place) and has drawn together a group of highly effective school improvement practitioners, including past and current headteachers across the primary and secondary phases as well as specialists in all other aspects of school leadership and management, including special educational needs, human resource, finance and premises management (see attached professional resumes of key members of the ALT team). This core team is managed, deployed and quality assured by the Chief Executive and is supported by a larger team of expert associates. All members of the ALT are committed to challenging and appropriately supporting schools and local governing bodies to rapidly drive up standards and achieve maximum value for money.

2. Business Details

Company name:

The Active Learning Trust Limited

Address:

Registered Office: c/o Isle of Ely Primary School, School Road, Ely, Cambs

Telephone number:

01223 728394

Legal status:

A company limited by guarantee. Company number 7903002, incorporated on 9th January 2012.

The Company will:

Act in accordance with its memorandum and articles of association with the declared aim of advancing, for the public benefit, education in the United Kingdom, in particular establishing, maintaining, carrying on, managing and developing Academies offering a broad and balanced curriculum. The Company's objectives have been approved by the Secretary of State for Education through its memorandum and articles of association and, as such the Trust is an exempt charity.

3. Members of the Trust

Lesley Adams

Lesley is also chair of the Trust Board and is an experienced Head of Service. She worked as head of integrated services for children and families at Birmingham City Council until 2010. This service area included early years, parenting support, family support and extended schools, and all saw significant improvement which Lesley led and managed. This included the development of 75 children's centres. She has experience of managing large, complex budgets, funding streams and large staff teams. During Lesley's time in Birmingham, improved outcomes for children at the end of the Foundation Stage were recognised in external scrutiny, and progress and attainment for under the 5s was in the top quartile of all Local Authorities. Lesley has an in-depth understanding and practical experience of how universal/targeted services interface with specialist services and of the value of appropriate practice supervision to safeguard children, families and practitioners.

Lesley is experienced in working in a politically sensitive environment and since leaving Birmingham, has had experience of interim management in London boroughs and knows how to "hit the ground running" in a new workplace. She is up to date with latest developments impacting on early years

Marion Lloyd

Marion Lloyd has 30 years' experience helping schools to improve outcomes for students. Much of this work was in the North of England working for a small metropolitan borough (Bury), then for one of the largest shire counties (Lancashire). Marion developed a wide range of experience and expertise working with all types of schools from Early Years settings to post 16 colleges. Marion's most recent work was with the National Strategies working first in the ICT team and then from 2005-2011 as a senior member of a regional team focusing on more generic school improvement issues through Local Authorities (LAs), School Improvement Partners (SIPs), National Challenge Advisers (NCAs) and schools. Marion designed, developed and delivered a wide range of teaching and training materials to LAs and more recently to individual schools, particularly Governing Bodies.

Bob Dool

Bob is currently Chair of the LGB's at Chantry Academy and Hillside Primary School & Nursery, both ALT schools. Highly experienced in educational development and management in both Scotland and England he has also taken advantage of work experiences across Europe and the USA widening his knowledge and experience. Bob's key skill areas at senior level include; Strategic leadership and management, communications and HR, leading and managing large teams, project management and development of new learning and sixth form centres, initiating and managing strong

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education/business partnerships and leading diverse teams including youth, adult and community learning. More recently, he has worked with local schools to help develop partnerships enabling students, staff and the wider community to benefit from working together. Latterly, Bob was part of the small project management team in Suffolk which developed and established a centre of post 16 learning. This was a £70 million project which opened in 2010, has nearly 1800 post -16 students and was recently judged by OfSTED as outstanding. Probably of greatest relevance is his passion for educational development with an emphasis on inclusion and partnership to help young people raise and achieve their aspirations.

Helen Capron

Helen Capron has explored education from a variety of angles: as a researcher, teacher, chair of governors and parent. She believes in high quality education for all and seeks to ensure this is being offered across all the Active Learning Trust schools

4. Directors of the Company

Gary Peile

Gary Peile is the Trust's Chief Executive. He provides the leadership for the Trust and leads on our relationship with the Department for Education and Local Authorities. He is committed to maintaining the highest quality support whilst keeping the cost and time of administration to the minimum, thus increasing the time we and schools will have to concentrate on leadership, management and school improvement. Gary plays a vital role in building and sustaining our relationships with schools, Local Authorities and other education institutions and along with the senior leadership team, will expand the professional support team to match the needs of schools as the Trust grows. The Trust will also draw on Gary's specific experience in the recruitment and retention of senior leaders

Clive Bush

Clive Bush is leading on the delivery of the curriculum and management aspects of the Littleport development – one of the most significant projects in which the Trust has been engaged, Clive was the first Chief Executive of the Trust and is also a successful former secondary school headteacher and Director of the Secondary National Strategy. He has had direct and successful experience of recruiting and retaining high quality senior leaders in both of the above roles.

Marilyn Toft

Marilyn is the Trust's Director of Continuing Professional development and also leads on governor development. A successful secondary school teacher, Marilyn subsequently worked in a LA leading professional development for all school staff. Working effectively with government departments and policy-makers, Marilyn then

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directed two national cross-phase programmes on healthy schools and behaviour and attendance with a strong focus on achieving positive outcomes for all children and young people.

Marilyn now provides support and challenge to a range of academies and schools on securing school improvement, including high quality teaching and positive behaviour and attendance for learning. Marilyn's particular skills and expertise are on collaborating with senior leaders to undertake supported self-review to achieve positive behaviour and regular attendance across the whole school community as well as to develop professional learning programmes that respond to priorities and needs.

David Bateson OBE

David Bateson OBE holds a portfolio of roles across educational sectors having retired from 20 years of headship in two all-age, all-ability and all-disability day and residential schools. His schools gained 6 outstanding Ofsted day inspections and 6 outstanding residential ones. Ash Field aimed to be an outward-facing centre of excellence and formed a cross-phase and sector school, agency and university trust.

His last school gained national and international recognition, being a National Teaching School training up to 5000 adults a year, supporting 500 pupils in mainstream and providing an outstanding education across 6 stages of education from P level to University entrance. The school had many links with schools abroad, receiving visitors from 23 countries, and a significant impact on a school for children with SEND in Delhi.

David combined executive headship with a variety of roles in special and mainstream education as an Ofsted inspector, consultant leader, external adviser, school improvement partner, professional partner, a threshold assessor, an NPQH panel member, a Local Leader in Education and a National Leader in Education, commissioned to turn schools round. David chaired regional and local special and mainstream education groups.

As both a Principal and a Regional Leader for the National College for Teaching and Learning, David visited several countries and sat on various OECD, DfE and Cabinet Office groups. He is a trustee of EMLC, the Shaw Education Trust and the Active Learning Trust and is a director of other educational boards. He chairs the National SEND Forum which has a dozen of the most significant SEND bodies on it and this meets regularly with the DfE, Ofsted, the NHS and other bodies over the year.

Jeremy Beswick

An investment fund professional with more than 25 years' experience in the industry, Jeremy has a background in international business management and leadership, marketing, sales and client service, strategy, planning and product development, spanning both traditional and alternative asset classes in retail and institutional

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markets. He has served on several boards and executive, investment, risk and audit committees. He has spoken at many fund management conferences internationally, and has written a number of articles published in the Financial Times and other financial journals. Jeremy currently serves as trustee, treasurer and director on the board of Carers Lewisham, and on the advisory panel of Snow-Camp, both London charities.

Mark Kerr

Mark has worked for Barclays for 30 years and has been a relationship director with Barclays Corporate Banking for 10 years specialising in the not for profit sector covering education, local authorities and charities. His portfolio is made up of around 60 clients with turnover/income of between £5m and £60m and includes around 10 academies and fifteen independent schools and FE colleges.

Jackie Cutchey

Jackie is the Chair of Governors at Westwood Primary School and Pakefield Primary School and has been involved in education for more than forty years, beginning her career as a primary school teacher in a London borough. Having held a variety of middle leader roles before gaining promotion to deputy headship in Lowestoft. Jackie was asked to be acting headteacher after eighteen months, subsequently becoming headteacher for the first time in 1997. Jackie has led schools through Ofsted inspections a total of five times with good outcomes each time.

During her time in education Jackie has been a teacher and parent governor, taking an interest in both her own school and those her own children attended. Jackie states that being a governor gave her a greater insight into the management of schools. Since retirement Jackie has been appointed to a board of directors of a Norfolk multi academy trust, is a governor of another Norfolk academy, as well, as stated above, as Chair of Governors at the ALT schools at Westwood & Pakefield Primaries in Lowestoft. Jackie has been part of two Ofsted inspections as a governor and has supported schools through attendance on key panels.

Greg Hely Hutchinson

Greg is a Managing Director for a leading global bank and is responsible for providing corporate finance advice to clients in the transportation, support services and infrastructure sectors. He has extensive experience advising boards of major multinationals on complex projects and transactions, including mergers & acquisitions, stock market listings and other large financing events.

Simon Staite

Simon is a partner with Nabarro, the international law firm, and specialises in real estate issues for the company. He has long experience of working as a trusted advisor

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to some of the real estate industries' leading players, which enables Simon to perform a non-executive role across a wide range of business activities, whether it be the analysis of risk, a valuable second opinion on a difficult issue or an intended strategic decision.

5. Our Vision

Our vision is to drive up standards in all the schools and settings we work with so that they can achieve a good Ofsted rating and have the capacity to reach the Outstanding judgement from Ofsted. We will do this by maximising our impact at school level, both with schools in need of significant improvement and with those that are already good and we will work with currently outstanding schools both to maintain that judgement and use their expertise to support others. Through this approach we will build a broad professional partnership of Academies that share the same vision and values represented by the Trust.

Specifically we will:

- Support the drive to raise standards in all schools, through sponsorship and the deployment of our own team of experienced school improvers and with the support of existing high performing schools
- Continually improve our capacity to ensure that the quality of what we deliver remains at an outstandingly high level by ensuring there are strong systems of performance management in place in all schools to support improvement, seeking out and valuing excellent performance and by ensuring good value for money,
- Ensure the delivery of high quality education through our Academies to support pupils across all age ranges from the early years to post 16
- Ensure there is strong governance and financial probity across the Trust and its schools
- Work with LAs and the Regional Schools Commissioner on school organisation issues to address local communities' demand for the provision of high quality school places locally
- Develop the leadership, management and governance in all our schools so that we grow and maintain the best leaders, and either lead or act as a partner with a Teaching School network to grow the next generation of effective teachers, school leaders, support staff and governors
- Establish a strong professional partnership of Active Learning Trust Academies so that they can stimulate and support each other across all aspects of teaching and learning and leadership and management.
- Establish, and where appropriate deliver, high quality professional development for all staff so we can maximise the opportunities for advancement within schools and the Trust more widely
- Provide value for money advice and, where applicable, services to our schools that minimise administration locally and maximise the potential for our managers to be leaders in their schools. The Trust will fully utilise procurement strategies, particularly in terms of IT, to provide cost effective solutions and

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operations within and across its schools.

- Ensure as a business that the Trust maximises the potential for income and maintains a high level of control on costs which provides long term security for the Trust and its schools.

In our role as sponsor we will:

- Ensure there is an unremitting focus on improvement in our schools, through our leadership, challenge and support role. We will focus on every pupil being able to achieve his or her potential and through that, have highly performing schools that are proud of their achievements and have a relentless focus on continuous improvement.
- Transform the leadership and governance arrangements in our schools, ensuring that staff have access to high quality support, advice and challenge with a focus on school improvement, including discipline and behaviour for learning. Our focus as sponsor will be on the value we add to individual schools, backed by our strength in being able to utilise data and other information to ensure that our resources are targeted across the board (for example on work with underperforming groups) to where they can make the most impact.
- Work with our schools to maximise the use of continually developing technology, to develop and sustain a stimulating curriculum and learning environment in school and beyond that supports both teachers and learners and establish effective professional networks across all the Trust's schools. We will specifically use web technology to expand access to resources through, for example, providing examples of outstanding lessons as exemplars of excellent practice for other colleagues
- Unlock the potential to highlight and share excellent practice through professional collaboration; we see one of our key roles as being the provision of mechanisms to enable this to happen in an easy and cost effective way
- Support our school leaders through the provision of high quality advice and well-targeted staff CPD, particularly through our Leading Active Learning Programme while ensuring value for money in the provision of services, maximising the funds available for teaching and learning
- Use the expertise in the Trust and, as we go forward, the expertise of excellent school leaders and teachers in Trust and partner schools, to identify areas of improvement and action planning to implement that improvement, so that we reach our goal of all Trust schools being outstanding schools
- Continue to develop our hub model, to aid improvement and communication. This will include the hubs developing joint working of school staff and governing

bodies, sharing good practice and developing their role as challenge partners

- Develop outstanding new schools approved during 2016 and propose new schools in the future which meet pupil place demand
- Ensure that budgetary control is strong and that we maintain a close relationship with the Department for Education and the Education Funding Agency to ensure budget planning for the longer term is secure.

6. Our work to date

Since our inception in 2012, the Trust has been accepted as a key partner by the Department for Education as an academy sponsor for schools in Cambridgeshire and Suffolk. At the time of writing this plan, the Trust has been approved as the sponsor of up to 21 schools across the two counties, working in three hubs. The Trust has continued to engage in a range of communication activities to ensure that the education community is aware of the Trust's capacity to deliver our vision to secure improvements in schools across the area where the Trust is an approved sponsor.

Current Operations (at January 2017)

The first ALT Academy, The Neale-Wade Academy in March, Cambridgeshire opened on April 1 2013. Since that date, 5 schools in Cambridgeshire and 11 schools in Suffolk have joined the Trust. At the time of writing this plan, a further four schools have been approved to open in 2017 or 2018; Littleport and East Cambs Academy, Highfield Littleport Academy, Chatters Primary School and Central Ipswich Primary School.

Our desire and determination is that the Trust develops as a national leader in school improvement, working closely with colleagues to raise standards of achievement across all phases. In line with our vision we believe that schools working together across the phases as part of the Trust will unlock potential in classrooms and school leadership that will impact upon both schools needing to improve (as judged by Ofsted or through their published test or examination results), and those already on a strong trajectory of continuing improvement

As can be seen, the Trust has grown since its formation in 2012 and we intend to develop provision across the Trust by:

- increasing the number new schools, via the Free Schools programme and good or outstanding schools working with the Trust (either as part of the Trust or as partners) to add to our school improvement capacity.
- Developing our hub based model of school improvement, with strong school to school support and growing partnerships to aid improvement across a range of functions
- Developing our relationships with other providers – sharing resources where appropriate to do so.
- Developing relationships with teaching schools and other providers of quality

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training and support for our staff

- Developing our central team of consultants who will work with us in Suffolk and Cambridgeshire to meet specific needs of schools.
- Developing our central team of managers to ensure schools can call upon excellent advice and support across all areas of the Trust's responsibilities and
- Ensuring we retain a balance between activities delivered by our central team and our partners to ensure we achieve high value for money

7. Legal Requirements

As a company limited by guarantee and as a Trust approved by the Secretary of State for Education, we will abide by the exercise of our powers as contained in our approved articles of association. The responsibility to manage schools (and through them to impact on the lives of young people) is a great one and we recognise the need not just to meet our objects, but also to fulfil the spirit and letter of all legislation relating to education as they apply to the Trust as sponsor.

In order to meet the legal requirements that apply to us we have:

- Engaged Mullis and Peake LLP and Stone King LLP as legal advisers to the Trust
- Engaged SBM & Co and Caton Fry Accountants as accountants to the Trust
- Engaged experienced and knowledgeable HR advisory services and contracted services from recognised employment lawyers.
- Engaged expert advice and support in terms of health and safety legislation in schools through Handsam Ltd.

8. Managing Risks

We recognise that, as with any business, there are risks that have to be managed and we will do this through the development of sound systems that balance risk management with appropriate innovation. In particular we have identified the following actions to mitigate risks for the Trust:

1. Undertake a thorough due diligence exercise prior to any school joining the Trust. This will include:
 - An examination of current standards across the school to ensure expectations are both aspirational and appropriate and planning is designed to enable it to progress at speed.
 - A financial health check on the school accounts, including an examination of liabilities.
 - A detailed check on any known contractual arrangements.
 - A check on the current position in relation to employees (for example, DBS clearance, sickness management, capability and discipline issues).
 - A property health check to secure the position in terms of the maintenance of buildings and other areas to establish the potential longer term needs for the school.

2. Provide clarity in terms of responsibility both at school and Trust level, with clear lines of delegation and communication that encourage an open and honest dialogue in line with our values. This will provide an “early warning” system to be established so that risks can be highlighted and appropriate actions taken to mitigate those risks. This will include further developing our documentation to support schools in their understanding of their responsibilities such as keeping policies and practices under review to ensure they meet national and local requirements. This work has included the publication of a wide set of health and safety policies and the publication of updated finance manuals and procurement policies to support all schools in meeting the requirements both of the Trust and the Education Funding Agency.
3. Establish and maintain highly effective internal and external communications. Maintaining good internal communication within the Trust will ensure colleagues are aware of key issues and events and the future direction of the Trust and enable them to play a part in those developments. We also wish to establish good communication with local communities, parents and other schools and providers to both gain confidence in the work of the Trust to raise standards and to help manage reputational risk, recognising that the move to academy status may sometimes prove difficult in some localities.
4. To require each school, as well the Trust, to maintain a register of risks and how those risks are mitigated.

9. Marketing and Communications

As stated earlier, we have sought to explain the Trust’s offer via direct communication with schools and Local Authorities and through the Trust’s website (www.activelearningtrust.org). As part of our strategy to make colleagues aware of our distinctive offer to schools, we intend to continue the direct approach to colleagues in the next phase of development of the Trust. We also wish to continue the dialogue with colleagues in the Department for Education to ensure they are aware of the Trust’s capacity and how its work is developing school improvement across its schools.

As the Trust develops, our marketing and communications activities will change to reflect the needs of both the Trust itself and its schools. We intend to continue to use external suppliers to with overseeing this work, but we expect all colleagues to be aware of their responsibilities both to communicate effectively and make others aware of the work of the Trust and its schools. Specifically we will:

- Extend our use of the internet, social media and IT generally to aid engagement with the Trust.
- Build relationships with parents and local communities where schools work with the Trust to ensure our work is understood and that there is clarity around the reasons for decisions taken to support pupil attainment.
- Utilise opportunities at key educational events to explain the work of the Trust.
- Seek opportunities for our leaders to engage with the wider educational

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community.

- Work with local press to highlight the achievement of schools in raising attainment.
- Produce clear publicity materials describing the key features of the Trust that can be made available to governors, local businesses and other stakeholders who have an interest in the development of a school.
- Use the educational press to extend awareness of the work of the Trust so that more schools are in a position to consider joining us.

10. Managing the Business

It is our intention to maximise spending on school improvement activities and minimise our central costs. We will do this by maintaining a small central team of high quality professionals some of which will be home-based, when not working in Trust schools. We will use our successful and long-term experience of IT-based remote working to ensure we maintain excellent and close working relationships that are maintained across the team and we expect the central team to be able to work with minimum levels of administration. In order to achieve this, we have contracted an IT provider to design, manage and host the ALT website, manage secure email for the Trust, and support a web presence and email for Trust schools. Further to this, members of the ALT Senior Leadership team are equipped with the necessary IT facilities to achieve these 'smarter' ways of working.

As stated earlier, we will strengthen our hub-based model of working in Lowestoft, Ipswich and Cambridgeshire with clear plans as to how schools working together can both aid school improvement and deliver our business objectives through sharing good and outstanding practice. We also recognise the need to ensure this practice is shared across the Trust.

During 2016, the Trust took the opportunity to expand its direct support to its schools by increasing its school improvement capacity and the finance and admin support team. This meant that the central operations, and the Trust head office, moved to Isle of Ely Primary School at the start of the 2016/17 year where additional space was available both for the team and through improved meeting space

Management of the Trust

We maintain a small core team of employees to run the business as a corporate entity with a range of consultants and partners adding to our capacity to support the schools in the Trust. .

As of January 2017, The Trust has the following centrally appointed staff in place:

- Gary Peile, Chief Executive

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- Jan Steel, Director of HR
- Clive Paskell, Director of Finance and Operations
- David Hilton, Director of Standards and Curriculum
- Marilyn Toft, Director of CPD
- Joy Parke, Director of Primary Standards
- Karen Jarvis, Governance Lead
- Joy Robinson, Procurement and Estates Manager
- Nicki Mayne, Lowestoft finance hub lead
- Lucy Wedderburn, Finance Manager
- Joanne Sanders, Administrative Assistant
- Aileen Stanford – HR & General Assistant

The contracts and salary levels for all senior posts are determined by the Board's Remuneration & Personnel Committee.

Further Capacity - Core Posts

As stated earlier, the Master Funding Agreement is in place for the Trust along with Supplementary Funding Agreements for all other schools who have been approved to join the Trust. With further agreements, it will be our intention to increase the personnel capacity in our core team, balanced with the use of high quality professionals to support schools on the basis of assessed needs. One of our first priorities will be to add to the professional development, coaching and mentoring mix of skills in the central team in order to respond to the needs of schools for bespoke CPD approaches and to underpin our commitment to development as a means of retaining our best staff.

Our capacity to support all other aspects of our work will be via our central team of consultants and/or through our partners. We already have significant capacity to support all phases of education and aspects of support across SEN, Behaviour and attendance and alternative education. We have used such partnership arrangements to deliver a series of specialist reviews across our schools, for example in Early years provision. We also have a number of partnerships in place to support our work (for example with highly effective providers specialising in literacy, numeracy, the revised national curriculum and assessment)) and we will extend these as the Trust develops.

Premises

As stated above, our intention is that our central team will be small and its members will spend the majority of their time working with schools. Our registered office is at a separate space in Isle of Primary School and we intend to continue to minimise central premises costs for the central Trust operations.

We are aware that, as the Trust grows, we will need to extend our support for school premises operations. The Trust received capital allocations from central government and this is used to support improvements in the condition and security of schools.

Contracts with third parties

We can maximise our value for money through quality relationships with third party providers both to support the Trust in its work with schools and in terms of supporting schools to minimise their costs outside the classroom. We already have in place a premises and procurement lead who will assist with contractual arrangements and help us develop this work to ensure we achieve maximum value for money. Initial contacts suggest there are considerable benefits from working with other quality assured providers, both to enhance our capacity and to ensure we have the ability to call on expertise when we need it, based on our regular assessment of need.

11. Further Developments

The Trust has been advised by the Department for Education that its operations need to be focussed in Suffolk and Cambridgeshire. Following discussions with the Department and a review by the Trust Board, our 2016/17 business plan was approved on the following basis:

- That given the impact on capacity, the Trust would not be able to support further schools joining the Trust who are judged as inadequate by Ofsted
- That it would be possible to support further schools who are judged as requiring improvement, good or outstanding as they may well add capacity to the Trust and its schools, particularly through working with our hubs
- That we would support the provision of new schools to enable the hubs to have between 6 and 7 schools to aid school to school support and joint working to aid school improvement

The Trust recognizes that the picture of English education continues to change and our business plan needs to remain flexible to both secure the Trust's financial position and its ability to support improvements in the region within which it works. Specifically the following external elements and other drivers will impact on our decision making:

- The role of the National and Regional Schools Commissioners in seeking to extend the role of MATs who are seen as strong in terms of school improvement. The Trust is seen as a regional trust and is below the size of a Trust, with 30 schools, that would be considered to be a system trust – that is one with a wider role beyond that supporting a number of schools in a specific region.
- The continued growth in pupil numbers in the Eastern region which in itself may require the Trust to expand both existing schools and add further new schools
- The changes being proposed by Government including allowing selective schools to expand, or new ones to open, while making sure they support non-selective schools
- The capacity of the Trust to support schools that are already part of the Trust to both improve attainment and progress of pupils AND achieve a good or

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outstanding Ofsted judgement

- The ability of the Trust to manage any further expansion, both in terms of personnel and financial requirements.

Primary Schools

Whilst the Trust's approach to school improvement is based on the assessed need in each school, there are clear advantages to working with a cluster of schools (working together as a hub) within the context of a national organization. Not only will schools in the Trust be able to access our high quality people to support them in their improvement, but we will be able to better utilize resources locally to support a group of schools, be that in terms of classroom support or leadership or through the support services we anticipate being able to procure at a better price as our purchasing power increases.

This hub model of schools working within the Trust in a location has much to commend it. Each hub has work plans that set out how our hub leads support individual schools as well as providing clarity on where schools work together to strengthen delivery and outcomes for pupils.

Secondary and Special Schools

During 2017 the Trust's work with schools in the secondary and special areas will grow substantially. At the time of writing the Trust is the sponsor of two secondary schools – The Neale-Wade Academy in March Cambs and the Chantry Academy in Ipswich and one special school (all age) – Highfield Ely Academy. This provision will be extended to include Highfield Littleport Academy and Littleport and East Cambridgeshire Academy during 2017. The Trust will continue to explore how it can support work with special schools and additional education via Pupil Referral Units who wish to work with our schools as part of a school improvement approach. As stated earlier, we have the experience at board level of an outstanding executive headteacher of a special school academy and have a number of appropriately experienced consultant colleagues who have expressed a determination to work with us with and in special schools.

Overall size of the Trust – a conclusion

At the time of writing this plan, the Trust aims to grow to a total of 21 schools by 2017/18 – as follows:

Secondary – 3 schools (2 in Cambs, 1 Ipswich)

Special 2 schools (Both in Cambs)

Primary 16 schools (5 in Cambs, 4 in Ipswich and 7 in Lowestoft).

A bid has been made to secure an additional primary school in Lowestoft.

As stated earlier in this, the Government’s current policy, as expressed by the National Schools Commissioner, is that regional MATs will be of a size less than 30 schools, with those at or above that figure being considered “national MATs”. Given the need to secure good or outstanding status in all Trust schools and to raise progress and attainment in every school, this plan is based on the Trust sustaining a position below 30 schools and our new activities being based upon:

Seeking to attract further good or outstanding schools to join the Trust, preferably in the secondary sector to aid progress in existing schools and to help deliver our new provision

Providing some alternative provision through the free schools programme, to support our primary schools in Suffolk.

Bidding for any new provision in the areas we already serve in Suffolk and Cambridgeshire (this may be in any phase).

Seeking links with, or establishing our own Teaching school to aid our CPD and recruitment and retention of staff.

12. Finance

Attached to this plan is the plan for the budget from the approved position from 2016/17 to 2018/19 for the Trust’s central operation. Each individual school budget has been

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approved by a local governing body and signed off by officers in accordance with our scheme of delegation.

Since incorporation (and prior to the successful completion of a Master Funding Agreement with the Department for Education), the Trust's activities have been financed through:

Grants from the Department for Education to aid the development costs of the Trust.

Grants to support the work of the Trust in all schools which are in an Ofsted category which means they require improvement.

This funding allowed the Trust to:

- Successfully support schools in a range of activities identified in action plans and other work necessary to raise standards.
- Implement a comprehensive multi-academy finance system (PS Financials) for use across all the Trust's schools
- Implement arrangements with solicitors and accountants
- Meet with schools, local authorities, DFE colleagues and other interested parties to discuss the role of the Trust in improving educational outcomes.

The attached budget has been prepared on the basis of the allocation of the Trust's agreed 4% GAG funding only – recognising that grant funding and balances carried forward from previous years are in effect "one off" income streams. This budget provides reassurance that the activities of the Trust in terms of approved staffing levels and the support to school improvement can be funded from ongoing resources.