



# Ad Astra Academy Trust Strategic Plan 2017-2020

September 4th 2017

## Introduction

This second strategic business plan, completed August 2017, aims to clearly define the objectives and priorities for Ad Astra Academy Trust over the next three years. We acknowledge that changes to internal and external contextual factors may influence this plan, however it will be revisited periodically (minimum of twice per year) to ensure that achievements and impact are measured, objectives and priorities are appropriately monitored and that the contents remain relevant.

This plan was collated following an intensive development day to which all members, trustees and headteachers were invited. During this day attendees used Sir David Carter's – *'Characteristics of Successful Multi-Academy Trusts- DfE August 2015'* as their inspiration. This plan reflects the moral purpose which permeates the work of everyone involved in Ad Astra. It is intended that the document will enable the reader to clearly understand the fundamental principles which underpin the Trust and gain an insight into the direction of travel with the confidence that the Trust and the schools within it are in good hands.

As this is a strategic business plan, clearly the focus is on delivering business related objectives that support the core focus of delivering an outstanding education. We understand that as an academy we operate in a different context to that of a maintained school and the associated risks and challenges must be appropriately managed. However, Ad Astra Academy Trust believes that strong business support is intrinsically linked to strong school improvement. A sound business model that delivers efficiency, effectiveness and economies of scale frees up not only financial resources for re-investment in curriculum priorities but also ensures that the time of our educational specialists can be dedicated to ensuring the educational progress and achievement of all pupils. We do not underestimate the amount of time that can be diverted to non-teaching and learning priorities if the business support function is not properly managed. This plan aims to ensure that this is led and managed effectively from both a strategic and operational perspective.

## Three Year Objectives

### Development and Growth

Trustees have made a strong commitment to the future growth and development of Ad Astra and have agreed to consider schools that are within one hour of the central office which is likely to include Tees Valley, North Yorkshire, Durham and Sunderland. Each school currently contributes a small percentage of their school budget (excluding ring fenced and school specific grants such as Pupil Premium) to the central budget to cover the costs of the central support functions.

#### Colour code

**Red:** Not completed or not currently on track to meet target date

**Amber:** Not completed but work is in progress and on track to achieve target date

**Green:** Achieved objective

**PRIORITY 1- VISIONING AND STRUCTURE**

- All internal stakeholders will subscribe to and promote the ethos and mission of Ad Astra trust.
- Maintain the ratio of good / outstanding schools to sponsored at 2:1.
- Develop a sustainable and achievable growth plan to increase the size of the trust to ensure long-term viability, acting upon any annual external QA visit or assessment or challenge by; DfE, RSC, Ofsted, ESFA and audit.

Tasks	Lead	Timescale	Success Criteria	Impact	Performance Measure
<b>Objective 1.1 - Schools' strategic development plans are to be aligned with the Trust Strategic Plan.</b>					
1.1.1 Schools will evidence that through their delivery of their school development plan at least 2 of the Trust's objectives are being delivered.	Headteacher Board	Trialled 2018-19 and in place for 2019-20	Schools' Development Plans clearly demonstrate a link to two trust objectives.	Schools' Development Plans and the Trust Strategic Plan are strategically aligned.	
1.1.2 To construct a process by which schools' internal development plans influence the trust's Strategic Plan.	Headteacher Board	Trialled 2018-19 and in place for 2019-20	Process is in place to ensure schools' strategic priorities are communicated effectively to trust level.	Schools' Development Plans and the Trust Strategic Plan are strategically aligned.	

**Objective 1.2 –**

- **Develop a clear delegated framework for governance at every level of the trust.**
- **Consistent review of governance system to ensure it is fit for purpose and in alignment with corporate philosophy and capacity.**

1.2.1 Develop a clear communication strategy for the scheme of delegation ensuring that all schools are fully aware of responsibilities of the LGB and of the trust.	CEO/HoO/Chair's Forum	Autumn 2017	All LGB have a presentation on the implications of the revised SoD Autumn 2017	There is no ambiguity in elements of the SoD that create confusion and misunderstanding	
1.2.2 MAT and LGB boards will undergo a skills audit and gap analysis, identifying additional skillset which is necessary to support delivery of Strategic Plans including monitoring non-attendance.	Trustees, Members, LGB	Summer 2018	Any skills gaps have been identified. Each LGB has a full complement of skilled well-attended governors.	Governance is robust and governors who have long non-attendance records are replaced with highly skilled members.	

1.2.3 Create a responsive induction and training plan for governance.	Martyn Ingram/ Heather Jackson/HoO	Spring 2018	Governors (and Trustees where relevant) are fully prepared for their role	Governance is exceptionally strong	
1.2.4 Construct through collaboration a common framework for agendas of committee and sub-committee meetings.	Martyn Ingram/ Heather Jackson/HoO	Autumn 2017	All schools are challenged and supported effectively and equally by external governance	Governance is exceptionally strong	
1.2.5 Review Ad Astra's governance management systems after 6 months and present a report for trustees to consider.	CEO/HoO	May 2018	All schools are challenged and supported effectively and equally by external governance	Governance is exceptionally strong	
1.2.6 Plan a trust capital sub-committee including priorities, criteria and decision-making processes should the trust grow to 3000	CEO	July 2020	All schools are challenged and supported effectively and equally by external governance	Governance is exceptionally strong	

pupils in the next two years.					
1.2.7 Undertake a review of Complaints and grievance management procedures to ensure policies are transparent	CEO/HoO	April 2018	All stakeholders are aware of who the Trust Complaints Co-ordinator is and a surcharge policy is discussed and approved by trustees.	Complaints are resolved effectively.	
<b>Objective 1.3 - The trust board is to have full awareness of the risk profile of the entire organisation.</b>					
1.3.1 The risk profile is to become a standard agenda item at governance meetings across the trust.	HoO/Chair	October 2017	Trustees and LGB are fully aware of risks		
1.3.2 Implement a unified trust wide risk management system.	HoO	April 2018	Trustees and LGB are fully aware of risks		
<b>Objective 1.4 - Grow the trust, adding additional schools with a target of achieving in excess of 3000 pupils by 2019.</b>					
1.4.1 Be pro-active and receptive to	CEO	October 2017	Ad Astra welcomes schools that have the	Ad Astra Trust grows as a result of a	

approaches from interested schools and identify target schools to engage with to achieve the aim.			same philosophy and moral purpose as the current ones.	positive targeted marketing strategy having no detrimental impact on current schools.	
1.4.2 Develop a marketing strategy to promote Ad Astra Trust to this audience including holding annual open days.	CEO	October 2017	Ad Astra's marketing strategy is completed and publicity material, including new brochure is of a high professional quality	Ad Astra Trust continues to grow in moderation and having no detrimental impact on current schools.	
1.4.3 Enhance PR to the parents by better communicating the achievements and benefits of Ad Astra trust	CEO	First Edition Christmas 2017	An annual newsletter of successes, changes and direction of the trust is produced for all parents of pupils within Ad Astra.	Positive marketing of Ad Astra's reputation in the region supports the trust growth	
<p><b>PRIORITY 2- CENTRAL TRUST INFRASTRUCURE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>All internal stakeholders will buy into and support Performance Management, Governance and Quality Assurance processes.</b></li> <li>• <b>Ensure capacity going forward is strengthened financially and through strong succession management and planning.</b></li> </ul>					



<b>Objective 2.1 – Performance Management Systems</b>					
2.1.1 Establish and embed Performance Management for central trust staff and any associated CPD requirements.	CEO	December 2017	All the central team have rigorous PM in place	Schools receive high quality support from the central team	
2.1.2 Introduce a CEO PM committee with external challenge from another trust.	Chair	December 2017	All the central team have rigorous PM in place	Schools receive high quality support from the central team	
<b>Objective 2.2 - Develop a succession plan and talent management strategy for all central trust staff and school leadership positions.</b>					
2.2.1 Produce an organogram which explains roles, responsibilities, skills matrix, line management and who acts up when needed in each role.	CEO	December 2017	All temporary risks and gaps have clear lines of cover should it be required	Schools continue to receive high quality support from the central team	

2.2.2 Introduce an emergency headteacher cover policy including names.	CEO	December 2017	All temporary risks and gaps have clear lines of cover should it be required	LGB can be reassured that a highly regarded substitute headteacher or headteacher mentor will be immediately available if required	
2.2.3 Develop a future Ad Astra headteacher network alongside LGB	CEO	December 2017	Succession planning strategies are strong within Ad Astra	Future headteachers are grown and developed within Ad Astra	
<b>Objective 2.3 - Ensure Ad Astra is financially stable within ESFA guidelines and legally in terms of employment legislation with particular regard to;</b>					
2.3.1 Produce a financial risk statement for trustees for 2017-18 with a variety of scenarios and resolutions.	CEO/HoO/AD	October 2017	Trustees and Headteacher Board are fully aware of benchmarks and tipping points and work to support the trust going forward.	During a period of growth the trust manages income and expenditure effectively	
2.3.2 Evaluate schools' current contracts and SLAs and tender again	HoO/Trust Finance Committee	April 2018	The Trust has identified savings that can be passed	Schools' budgets are effectively planned and drive more	

where necessary starting with catering in 2017-18.			on to schools to support learning	funding to teaching and learning	
2.3.3 Review and approve a trust reserves policy	HoO/Trust Finance Committee	2017-18	The Trust balances the needs of external audit against the necessity to drive up outcomes in schools	Schools' budgets are effectively planned and drive more funding to teaching and learning	
2.3.4 Annually review the GAG percentage per school	HoO/Trust Finance Committee	April each year	The Trust balances the needs of supporting the increasing costs of the central team against the necessity to drive more funding into schools	Schools' budgets are effectively planned and drive more funding to teaching and learning	
2.3.5 Design and develop, as the trust grows, to meet the needs of any new schools, including financial breakdown of an Ad Astra 'Hub' model south of the Tees which may	CEO	Autumn 2017	The Trust balances the needs of supporting the developing costs of elements of the central team against the necessity to drive	Schools' budgets are effectively planned and drive more funding to teaching and learning	

include lone or satellite working and ensure Ad Astra remains #employerofchoice			more funding into schools		
2.3.6 Explore possible SLA opportunities to outsource trust services where capacity is strong whilst also auditing current central trust capacity.	HoO/Trust Finance Committee	April 2018	Trust to evaluate successes of HR SLA and plan two new outsourcing possibilities of School Improvement/CPD and Estates.	The trust budget is effectively planned and drive more funding to teaching and learning	
2.3.7 Ensure HR policies and procedures reflect the goals and aims of the trust to become #employerofchoice	Martyn Ingram/Trust HR Committee	September 2018	HR policies are revised in light of national changes	HR policies are all approved by external stakeholders and trustees	
<b>PRIORITY 3- SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure outcomes and provision in schools continues to be of a high quality.</li> <li>• All internal stakeholders will engage in &amp; support school improvement initiatives.</li> <li>• Ensure capacity for school improvement is strengthened to ensure succession planning is in line with trust expansion &amp; growth.</li> </ul>					
<b>Objective 3.1 All schools to be at least good or outstanding by their next inspection</b>					

3.1.1 Develop a MAT school improvement strategy.	HTB/HoSI	July 2018	Ad Astra schools have consistent approaches to school improvement strategies	All schools are graded at least good for teaching and learning	
3.1.2 Through self-evaluation of each academy, bespoke support from the Trust is provided to improve performance & standards.	HTB/HoSI	December 2018	School Self-Evaluation strategies are rigorous within each school and externally challenged.	All schools are graded at least good for progress.	
3.1.3 MAT leaders articulate their school improvement repertoire.	HTB/HoSI	December 2018	MAT Leaders are identified and capacity is built to support outside of their own school.	Ad Astra has a directory of leadership and school improvement support immediately to hand	
3.1.4 Maintain synergy between Local Governing Bodies & Trustees.	HTB/HoSI/Martyn Ingram	September 2018	Headteachers start to develop similar data and pupil progress reporting mechanisms over time	Governance of School Improvement is very effective at all levels	
3.1.5 To continue to further develop the power of the Headteacher Board	Headteacher Board	July 2018	The HTB co-construct successful strategies for moderation, assessment, pupil tracking and teaching	The quality of moderation, assessment, pupil tracking and teaching and learning is at	

(HTB) in terms of School Improvement			and learning that through time become embedded within schools leading to better outcomes.	least good or better in every school within the trust.	
3.1.6 To ensure the aggregated outcomes at KS2 in July 2018 are 5% above national averages and the gap increases at least by 1% again in 2019.	Headteacher Board	July 2018 July 2019 July 2020	KS2 results continue to remain above National Averages	Outcomes in Ad Astra schools are at least above national averages if not well-above.	
<b>3.2 Schools to engage confidently in effective peer to peer support</b>					
3.2.1 Effective peer review within and outside of the Trust. This will include Head teacher, deputy head teachers and middle leaders trained in peer review and engaging in effective peer review practice.	HTB/HoSI	July 2018	Ad Astra has a culture of very effective peer review in each school	Annual Peer Review leads to improved outcomes over time	
3.2.2 At least one Ofsted inspector in the MAT.		July 2020	Ad Astra sources and funds the training of one employee to	All of Ad Astra schools are very well prepared for inspection.	

			become an Ofsted inspector		
<b>3.3 There is a systematic programme of school to school support that is focused on the need of individual academies.</b>					
3.3.1 To form a pool of talented teachers within the trust identifying their well-equipped skills set. To deploy teachers from the pool at the point of need to schools within the Trust to impact on school improvement.	HTB/HoSI	July 2018	Leaders at all levels within the MAT are identified and capacity is built to support outside of their own school.	Ad Astra has a directory of support immediately to hand	
3.3.2 Facilitate smaller learning communities that mentor and coach staff based on a needs analysis. E.g. SEND, behaviour, teaching & learning competencies etc.	HTB/HoSI	July 2018	As the trust grows develop hubs across the region determined on need	Employees within Ad Astra have bespoke school improvement support provided at no cost by the trust	
3.3.3 To agree SEND and SEMH protocols across the trust to support inclusion for all	Headteacher Board	Autumn 2018	The HTB discover 'quick wins' in the way they support one another in the management of	Pupils with SEMH and SEND are fully included within Ad Astra Academy Trust schools	

			pupils with SEMH and SEND		
<b>3.4. There is a Trust wide commitment to making a contribution to local, regional and national educational networks beyond the MAT</b>					
3.4.1 One of the MAT schools to be the lead school within a Teaching School Alliance providing support across the Trust and to schools beyond the Trust.	CEO	January 2018	The Trust supports a Primary school to be the lead school in a new Teaching Schools Application.	The Trust has a successful teaching School within the MAT.	
3.4.2 Develop collaboration with other MATs to learn from and contribute to other MATs.	CEO	July 2019	As the trust grows develop hubs with other MATs across the region determined on need	Employees within Ad Astra have school improvement support outside of the trust	
3.4.3 Increase the number of accredited system leaders within the MAT to impact school improvement.	CEO	July 2019	Trustees can be assured that the quality of leadership has been moderated externally against national benchmarks	The quality of leadership is outstanding in 75% schools within the trust.	
3.4.4 To develop links and collaboration with other Teaching School Alliances to drive regional system led leadership capacity.	CEO	July 2019	The trust continues to be outward-facing in working with Teaching Schools across the region	Outcomes in Ad Astra schools are at least above national averages if not well-above.	



