



STRATEGIC PLAN

2024 - 2027

“Working Together
to Achieve
Excellence”



Welcome from the Chair of Trustees

I have had the privilege of being Chair of Trustees at Owlcotes Multi Academy Trust since it was established in 2018. As a retired primary school Headteacher with a passion for early years and primary education, I was drawn to the role by the values, vision and ethos of the Trust, all of which mirrored my own.

Owlcotes puts the children, families and communities it serves at the heart of everything it does. The desire to ensure that every child reaches their full potential, by providing an excellent education and outcomes delivered by outstanding teachers and leaders, drives the work of the Trust.

Each school in the Trust is an equal partner, which is very important to us. All schools also retain their own unique identity which enables them to focus on improving outcomes for the children in the community they serve.

The philosophy of 'Working Together to Achieve Excellence' has enabled a professional learning community, based on collaboration, to develop and strengthen over time. Owlcotes now has an established structure of professionals who work together and support each other across the Trust's family of schools, leading to continuous professional development for all staff. This in turn has a positive impact on outcomes for all children in the Trust.

The CEO, supported by a very effective Executive Team, has driven the direction of the Trust with her vision, professionalism, knowledge and strategic thinking. She has worked tirelessly to put that vision successfully into practice.

I am proud to have been involved in the journey so far, seeing the Trust grow from two schools to where it is now, and very much look forward to being part of where it will be in the future.



Judith Norfolk
Chair of the Board of Trustees
Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trust





Welcome from the CEO

I am delighted to be the CEO of the Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trust and I am proud of our achievements since our establishment in March 2018. We are a community of primary schools in Leeds, with a genuine desire to provide excellent education and great outcomes for all pupils.

We wholeheartedly believe in professional generosity as a force for good, both within and beyond Owlcotes. Collaboration is at the heart of our Trust, each school is an equal partner and our dedicated staff are committed to providing an aspirational, inclusive and ambitious curriculum for all our pupils.

Professional development is really important to us, and all staff, whatever their role, are encouraged and supported to develop their professional expertise. There is an emphasis on developing collaborative learning communities and networks across our trust, to continue develop and share good practice within our philosophy of 'Working Together to Achieve Excellence' We have a track record of promotion and progression of staff within Owlcotes, which means that we can attract and keep great staff working within our schools.

We value all qualities in the children that we teach and the communities that we serve. Schools in our Academy Trust are all very different. We firmly believe in schools having their own individuality, underpinned by common principles. This preservation of unique identity enables our schools to focus on the key priorities of teaching and learning that are specific to their own schools and which will most improve educational outcomes for their pupils in their communities.

Our Members and Trustees are highly committed to the success of the Trust. They have a range of skills and expertise and provide focused support and challenge with the needs of the pupils at the centre of their decision making.

I am incredibly proud of Owlcotes and our commitment to creating safe, welcoming, and inclusive environments for learning and development of all the children, families and staff within our Trust.



Lesley West
Chief Executive Officer
Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trust



About Owlcotes

Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trust was founded in 2018 to continue to share the commitment to collaboration, support and school improvement developed by the two founding schools, Pudsey Primrose Hill Primary School and Pudsey Waterloo Primary School.

We have the highest ambitions for everyone we work with, including our pupils, their families, our staff and any external partners. We are child centred, and put the best interests of our pupils at the heart of our work.

Our Commitment

We are committed to developing inclusive schools, sharing a common purpose to provide an excellent education and pastoral support for all pupils.

We strive to provide high-quality education for all children within our local communities by inspiring innovation, creativity and aspiration through an enriched curriculum and wider offer.

We are committed to the principles of professional generosity, co-operation and collaboration, with a strong focus on staff development.

We believe in preserving of the unique identity of all schools within the Trust.

Growth and Collaboration is Central to Our Success

We believe that collaboration is one of the greatest benefits of being part of a Trust. We facilitate networking at all levels and have developed collaborative learning communities across all schools and departments within our trust. We:

- Have a reputation for making a positive contribution to education in our communities;
- Develop strong strategic partnerships and effective collaborations;
- Have a track record of delivering sustainable school improvement;
- Engage in supporting local schools beyond Owlcotes MAT;
- Make a positive contribution to system leadership;
- Have taken on challenging schools and transformed previously under-performing schools.



Celebrating Our Success

Since our launch in 2018, the Trust has grown and developed. We have fulfilled our original growth plans. In September 2025 we are now:

9 schools

580+ staff

3200+ pupils

- There is a central staff team in place and an infrastructure of systems and policy frameworks for effective decision-making and for maximising value for money, for the benefit of children and their families.
- The Trust is financially secure and the CFO supports schools effectively to review and plan their budgets to ensure financial stability. There has been an improvement in our school buildings which have seen significant capital investment.
- We have created a strong governance model with a dedicated and skilled Trust Board, committed to continual improvement, supported by strong Local Governing Boards.
- All of our schools have improved in relation to their starting points on conversion. The curriculum in each school has been given a high priority and, as a result of focused planning and our collaborative approaches, the curriculum in each school is ambitious and effectively planned.
- The Trust gives the highest priority to school improvement. The effective central trust team provides a raft of support for all schools, offering financial management and oversight; premises development; compliance monitoring; recruitment support and HR functions. This enables school leaders the time and capacity to focus on improving the quality of education in their own schools. The Trust has developed a School Improvement Team of leading practitioners and trained moderators to provide school improvement support to schools within the Trust, under the direction of the Director of School Improvement. A coaching programme is supporting leaders and teachers at all levels to continue to develop their professional practice and an 'Aspiring Leaders' programme is developing future leaders.
- The Trust's ambition is to continue to create a collaborative approach to school improvement, where each school is an equal partner and can contribute to and learn from the good practice that exists within the Trust. We are proud of how effectively we have achieved this ambition. With these solid foundations in place, we are positive about the future and determined to achieve success in all we do.



How Do We Know We Are Doing a Good Job?

Testimonies from Headteachers, our partners and Ofsted

Being the Head of School of a member school of Owlcotes MAT has provided me with significant advantages, support and opportunities. The CEO of Owlcotes offers all schools invaluable, individual, unwavering support, advice, opportunity and TIME. The CEO is 'hands on' and makes sure she knows and understands the different contexts of each school. The individuality of each school is valued and celebrated and there is never a 'one size fits all' approach.

The collaborative approach to the Owlcotes Curriculum and Owlcotes Elements has provided our staff with an invaluable resource. It has been hugely beneficial being able to tap into the skills and expertise of colleagues in the other MAT schools in order to develop, review and refine the Owlcotes Curriculum. Meetings and planning sessions are undertaken in the 'Owlcotes way' - everyone's opinions and ideas valued and recognised and the outcomes are beneficial to all.

Ofsted October 2023: 'Trustees have a strong understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the school. They think strategically to ensure its long-term development and promote the sharing of excellent practice across the trust. Pupils and staff have benefited from the extensive staff development programme provided by the trust.'

Being in a MAT has supported our school to retain staff in leadership roles because of the opportunities that are available across the trust. It has also enabled us to keep great staff at all levels working within the MAT.

Ofsted May 2022: 'Teachers speak highly of the professional development they receive. Many have welcomed opportunities to develop their leadership skills. Staff benefit from trust-wide opportunities to share expertise with other schools'.

Collaboration is at the heart of a successful MAT as schools working together can create amazing things. This collaboration is different to the other partnerships/alliances our school has been a part of as there is a shared accountability and a long-term permanence to the partnership that ensures all members of the school community appreciate the benefits it brings to the school. There is a strong ethos that makes all schools feel valued and we are all encouraged to make the trust even better.

Ofsted April 2024: 'The trust values the school, and in turn, the school values the support from the trust. Trust staff who collaborate with the school know the school, the children and the community. Regular meetings with leaders across all levels both in school and beyond have contributed to strong a support network for the school. The best interests of the pupils are always at the top of the agenda'.

When choosing a MAT to be a part of, I do think that it is important to ensure as far as possible that values are aligned. This was one of the attractions of being part of the Owlcotes MAT- their clear commitment to raising standards in all schools yet doing so in a positive and supportive manner, investing in people.

Our Future: Working Together to Achieve Excellence

We will continue to focus on our core purpose – effective teaching and learning leading to strong outcomes for all pupil – so that all schools in the Trust become places of excellence, providing high quality education to our children and engaging positively with families and the wider community. We are resolute in our determination to keep each school at the heart of its community, building strong schools of choice and creating local solutions for local issues.

We will continue our unwavering focus on school improvement, developing a broad and ambitious curriculum and emphasising the absolute importance of oracy, reading, writing and mathematics, as we know that these skills are not only essential for academic success but also to enable our pupils to thrive as citizens in society.

For the future, we are committed to measured and responsible growth and we are committed to developing and maintaining excellent relationships with other schools. Our commitment to collaboration, co-operation and professional generosity extends to schools outside the Owlcotes family.

Our Strategic Aims: 2024-2027

We strive to ensure that all of our schools are forward thinking and innovative, with an absolute focus on effective teaching and learning, leading to the highest possible outcomes for all of our pupils so that children leave with values, skills, knowledge and qualities that will enable them to thrive in the future.

In order to achieve this, these priorities form the basis of the 'Working together to achieve excellence' strategic plan and will guide the focus of our work over the coming three years.

Our strategy will be delivered through five key themes:

Schools – Providing an exceptional educational experience so that Owlcotes schools become centres of excellence in their community.

People – Providing extensive professional development opportunities and well-being support.

Infrastructure – Providing excellent central services supporting leadership, finance, and compliance.

Estates – Prioritising environmental sustainability and investment in infrastructure to provide excellent facilities for our pupils, communities and staff.

Growth – Prioritising effective contribution to education in our communities and planning for sustainable growth.

Schools

Our Commitment

We are committed to providing an exceptional educational experience, developing and delivering high-quality, evidence informed practice so that Owlcotes schools become centres of excellence at the heart of their communities; working with families and our children - so that our pupils are ready for the next stage of education and are prepared to become confident citizens.

Our mission is to ensure that all schools are led by exceptional leaders and all pupils are taught by expert teachers with a focus on fostering a culture of continued improvement and an aspiration for all pupils to reach their potential.

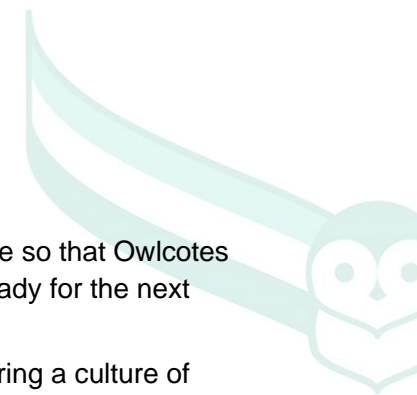
Our Strategy

We will do this by:

- Creating a culture of high expectation for all pupils, including pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, and those with Special Educational Needs; and a determination that all pupils can succeed. We believe in 'ambition without exception' and will continue in our drive to ensure equality of opportunity for all.
- Designing and implementation of a broad, ambitious and well-sequenced curriculum in all schools, with access to a wider range of enrichment opportunities and experiences that delivers excellence for all our pupils.
- Focusing on oracy, reading, writing and mathematics as essential skills for academic success at primary school and beyond.
- Supporting all every teacher to have curriculum and pedagogical knowledge to deliver exceptional teaching for all pupils.
- Improving and maintaining educational performance – attainment and progress, so that our schools have strong and improving outcomes.
- Ensuring that all our schools embrace inclusive practices, have strong and effective pastoral and family support and a focus on improving and maintaining attendance rates.
- Providing bespoke school improvement support to improve or maintaining high quality education in line with the current inspection framework.

Our Assurance

- Ensure consistency and quality across all key stages and all curriculum areas in all our schools.
- Ensure outcomes in statutory assessments are improving / maintained at school level.
- Average attainment and progress across the trust is in line with the national.
- We are closing the attainment gap for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds and those with additional needs.
- Ofsted grades of sponsored schools improve at their first inspection. Converter schools maintain or improve outcomes following conversion.
- Increased overall attendance and a reduction in persistent absence.
- Educational opportunities beyond the school day as an entitlement for all pupils.



People

Our Commitment

Our employees are our greatest asset and we recognise the absolute importance of having a motivated and dynamic workforce where our staff feel valued and supported. Our commitment is to ensure that Owlcotes has a reputation as an employer of choice centred around well-being, professional development and the offer of professional/ promotion opportunities.

Our Strategy

Attract the best people, invest in them, retain their services and benefit from their expertise by:

- Putting well-being at the heart of our people strategy, with a commitment to reducing workloads through effective and collaborative working practices and efficient central services.
- Training and Development given a priority with a focus on Train, Teach, Lead; engagement in ITT and apprenticeships to support workforce recruitment.
- Committing to a culture of professional learning and development opportunities with exceptional professional development as an entitlement, including:
 - excellent induction for all roles;
 - bespoke coaching, mentoring and shadowing opportunities;
 - an 'Aspiring Leadership' programme;
 - networking and collaborative opportunities through leadership and curriculum networks;
 - professional generosity.
- Providing access to employee schemes which support wellbeing, such as Occupational Health and mental health first aid trained lead staff.

Our Assurance

- Retention rates for teaching staff and leadership staff continue to be high.
- Recruitment of and retention rates for TAs and other support staff improve.
- Professional Development is tailored to individual needs and the school's context; draws upon research and is supported by evidence.
- Positive engagement in Professional Development (coaching and mentoring) is good in all schools.
- School staff engaging in the 'Aspiring Leaders' programme.
- Apprentice levy used to support the development of existing and newly appointed staff.



Infrastructure

Our Commitment

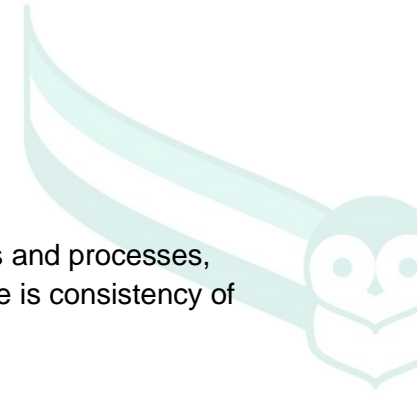
We will ensure that excellent central services are in place and continue to develop, delivering leadership support, efficient systems and processes, advice and resources across the full range of activities so that schools are supported, workload of school staff is reduced and there is consistency of support and effective systems operating across all schools in our Trust.

Our Strategy

- Effective support systems and professional networks supporting staff in school, governance and decision making.
- Expert central processes and support systems to ensure effective conversions, communication and information sharing.
- Financial planning to maximise the use of funding, using ICFP and accurate forecasting to support short and long-term decision making at school and trust level.
- Premises and estates teams providing rapid school support and effective investment for premises improvements.
- Effective management information systems ensuring trust-wide perspectives on performance.
- Leadership advice and support.
- Governance and Assurance frameworks to support decision making.

Our Assurance

- Trust investment strategy is robust, ensuring effective financial management and strong trust finances.
- Central services are adequate for the next stage of development of the trust, enabling the trust to grow through sponsored academies and convertor schools.
- Systems and processes continue to evolve and improve so that we meet the organisational needs of Owlcofes during this next period.
- School finances – strong investment, forward budget planning, taking account of changing context of schools and needs of the organisation.



Estates

Our Commitment

As a multi-million-pound organisation, whose aim is to educate our children and prepare them for their future, we recognise the need to continue to invest in our estates, and to align our education, operations and estates plans to work towards providing excellent learning and recreation facilities for our pupils, communities and staff. We have a duty to ensure sustainable and environmentally aware practices and are committed to implementing evidence informed actions to support our work in this area.

Our Strategy

- Ensuring the highest priority is given to ensuring pupils and staff have safe places in which to learn and work; with thorough health and safety practices, policies; investment in and initiatives.
- Ensure each school has premises that are fit for purpose and which provide attractive environments for effective learning.
- The development of inspirational play spaces/ green zones in each school as an entitlement.
- Focus on and embed a culture of environmental sustainability, embracing energy efficiency and environmental responsibility through estate plans, design, implementation and the curriculum.
- A robust digital infrastructure to enhance learning experiences and support pupils and staff to work effectively and efficiently, working in partnership with external providers.

Our Assurance

- To ensure that fully costed short-term and long-term estate plans in place, which set out our estate ambitions for the future.
- Condition of each building is improved/maintained in line with the premises development plans.
- Energy efficiency is prioritised and schools have implemented agreed protocols/ building improvements in line with estate plans.
- Overarching themes of play spaces, digital infrastructure, sustainability and environmental awareness are evident across the school estates.



Growth

Our Commitment

We are committed to sustainable growth of our trust and we will continue to seek opportunities for well-managed growth - at the pace which works for our existing schools. We will ensure that we maintain our reputation as a primary specialist, values driven and community focused trust, renowned for the contribution we make to schools in Leeds. We are proud of the partnerships we have established over the last five years, including those with the Leeds LA, who we have collaborated positively with to provide school to school support for a number of maintained schools. Owlcotes is already recognised by the DFE as a strong trust with both the capacity and capability to take on new schools.

Our Strategy

- Maintaining existing and developing new partnerships to increase our educational impact.
- Continue to be purposefully outward facing.
- Further develop the trust's relationship with single schools through our school improvement offer and coaching programmes.
- Taking on challenging schools and previously under-performing schools and delivering sustainable improvement.
- Working with good and outstanding schools to continue to build trust capacity for further growth.
- Remaining focused on geographical coherence by developing 'local hubs' across the city.
- Building a team of committed school improvement professionals to support sustainable growth and trust improvement without diluting our approach for schools already in our Trust.
- A relentless focus on continued improvement.
- Actively reviewing our growth strategy and plans at least annually as a Board of Trustees to ensure growth is planned and manageable.

Our Assurance

- Owlcotes continues to be recognised as a strong trust by the DfE, enabling us to continue to grow.
- Our trust continues to grow with an increase in the number of schools within Owlcotes.
- Our trust is able to demonstrate long-term financial stability.
- Our trust meets the diverse educational needs of all our schools and their communities.
- As we grow and develop our strong partnerships beyond Owlcotes trust continue to expand



Monitoring and Evaluation of the Strategic Plan

This Owlcotes strategic plan serves as an outline of priorities for achieving our long-term aspirations. Owlcotes Trust's executive team will take a lead in delivering the strategic plan, under the direction of the CEO.

The plan is designed to be dynamic and adaptable. Our assurance framework will provide us with up-to-date information about progress towards our aspirations, and support us in refining our plans and strategy over time. Progress towards strategic aims will be presented to trustees over the course of this plan. The Finance, Risk and Audit committee will ensure that risk management is in place for areas of focus within the plan.

Our strategic plan is designed to be adapted in the light of review and evaluation, as a result of growth and development and also as a result of any changes to national direction, this will ensure that our trust remains responsive to changing circumstances and any emerging opportunities.

Related Policies and Documents

- Owlcotes Evidence – Trust Quality Descriptions
- Owlcotes Growth strategy
- Owlcotes assurance framework
- Owlcotes Risk register
- Owlcotes Estates Plan
- Owlcotes Investment Strategy
- Milestones and Monitoring



Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trust

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