



Shropshire Church of England Academies Trust

School Improvement Strategy

Presented & Approved by Education Standards & Performance Committee	3 rd July 2025
Name of Chair of Trust Board	Malcolm Maclean
Date Signed	
Version	1.0
Date of Next Review	Summer term 2027



Executive Summary

Shropshire Church of England Academies Trust School Improvement Strategy is built upon the principles of collaboration, responsiveness, and ambition, tailored to meet the diverse needs of our eight primary schools. The strategy maximises the power of school-to-school support, distributed leadership, and targeted professional development to drive sustainable improvement across the Trust.

At its core, the strategy is underpinned by a tiered model of school development—**Stabilise, Repair, Sustain, and Innovate**—ensuring every school receives support proportionate to its context, while contributing to the collective strength of the Trust. Improvement is driven through a combination of cluster-based peer collaboration, structured quality assurance, and the strategic use of in-house expertise across teaching and leadership.

The Trust's central team provides system-level leadership and oversight, focusing their efforts on prioritised interventions, capacity building, and ensuring alignment with our core values and standards.

By fostering a culture where every school is both a recipient and provider of support, we aim not only to raise standards but to create a self-improving, resilient system where success is shared and sustained.

This strategy reflects our commitment to empowering our staff, strengthening leadership at all levels, and ensuring that every pupil in our care experiences the highest quality education—whatever their starting point so that as a group of school we are 'Flourishing Together'.



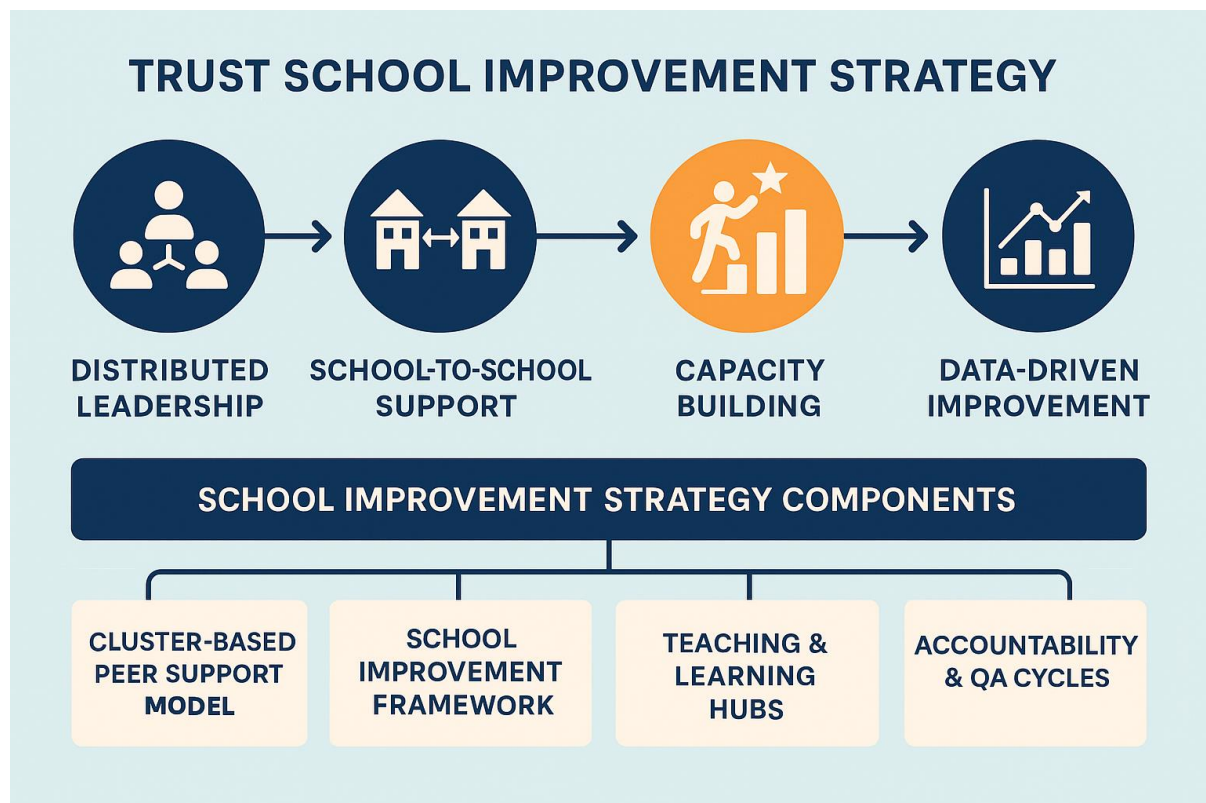
School Improvement Strategy

The School Improvement Strategy for **Shropshire Church of England Academies Trust** is structured around the following key principles.

Key Principles of SCEAT School Improvement Strategy

- 1. Distributed Leadership**
The Trust will utilise and grow leadership within schools to drive improvement across the trust.
- 2. Capacity Building**
Focus on sustainable leadership and professional development at every level.
- 3. Peer-to-Peer Collaboration**
Systematise school-to-school support through structured networks and reviews.
- 4. Data-Driven Improvement**
Use common assessment and monitoring tools to drive evidence-based actions.
- 5. Focused Central Support**
Target central resources (CEO, Director of Teaching and Learning) where impact is greatest.

School Improvement Strategy Components





1. Cluster-Based Peer Support Model

- SCEAT have divided the schools in the Trust into 3 area hubs based geography – central hub (central Shrewsbury), south hub (Bridgnorth), north hub (north Shrewsbury)
- Each cluster has an Executive Headteacher or Lead who coordinates improvement activity on a local level. To include:
 - Learning walks
 - Curriculum planning groups
 - Peer reviews (termly)
 - CPD opportunities on common development themes within hub group
 - Curriculum monitoring activities

2. School Improvement Framework

We will create and keep under review a shared Trust-wide School Improvement Framework, including:

- Trust-wide priorities (e.g., early reading, attendance, SEND)
- Clear expectations for teaching and leadership
- School review schedule
- Work towards an aligned assessment system

3. Teaching & Learning Mentor Schools

We will designate schools as a **"Teaching & Learning Mentor School"** where they have identified strong practice in particular areas (e.g., early reading, curriculum leadership).

- Host trust-wide CPD in their area of expertise
- Host subject network group(s)
- Deploy lead practitioners to schools in Trust as necessary
- Develop coaching programmes

4. Deployment of Internal Expertise

We will develop the Trust School Improvement Team made up of:

- Executive Headteachers (inc. SIP advisors), SENCOs, strong subject leads, or strong classroom practitioners from across schools within the Trust



- Deploy on a needs-basis to support other schools
- Time bought out via trust funding or reciprocal agreements

6. Strategic Roles in this Strategy

From September 2025

- Chief Executive Officer focuses on:
 - o Governance and accountability
 - o Executive Headteacher/Head of School performance and support
 - o Culture and strategy alignment
 - o HR processes in schools
 - o Safeguarding
- Director of T&L focuses on:
 - o CPD design (not necessarily delivery)
 - o Frameworks, including monitoring of Teaching & Learning, and quality assurance
 - o Coaching school leaders on pedagogy matched to Trust-wide expectations
 - o Curriculum Development Support
- Director of SEND and Inclusion focuses on:
 - o Monitoring key indicators related to safeguarding, attendance, behaviour, suspensions and exclusions
 - o Ensure each school is meeting its statutory duties for SEND, Pupil Premium, and vulnerable groups
 - o Champion inclusive practice and well-being across the school

6. Accountability & QA Cycles

- Each school completes their school Self-Evaluation Summary (known as the SEF) and shares to Trust (at least annually)
- Central team reviews termly data report and Head reports
- Use triangulated data (monitoring reports inc. book looks, lesson observations, school level survey summaries)
- Use external reports/feedback



7. Leadership Development Pipeline

- Establish senior and middle leader development across the trust
- Offer NPQ support or internal programmes
- Build succession planning pathways for Heads and Deputies

8. Monitoring Impact

- Termly Trust-wide T&L/outcomes report to the Board through Education Standards Committee including any schools causing concern
- Progress of schools tracked against agreed KPIs
- Annual staff survey to assess culture and collaboration

9. Further Enhancements/Future Developments

- Digital platform for resource sharing (e.g., SharePoint, Teams)
- Annual “Trust Conference” for staff inspiration and shared learning
- External QA (e.g., external school improvement partner(s))

School Support Tiers

Adapting the Trust-wide strategy to accommodate schools at different stages of development (e.g., **Stabilise** → **Repair** → **Sustain** → **Innovate**) is crucial to ensuring equitable, targeted support while maintaining alignment across the Trust.

Tier Determination: Observable Features in Schools

Domain	Observable Feature	Stabilise	Repair	Sustain	Innovate
Leadership & Management	Stability and effectiveness of leadership	Frequent leadership turnover; weak capacity; reactive	Leadership in place; rebuilding credibility; some strategic direction	Stable leadership; delivering results; reflective	Capacity to support others; highly strategic; proactive
	Governance effectiveness (LGB)	Weak oversight; unclear roles; poor engagement	Basic compliance; some challenge emerging	Effective challenge and support; good data literacy	Strategic, outward-facing governance; influences beyond school



Domain	Observable Feature	Stabilise	Repair	Sustain	Innovate
Quality of Education	Teaching & learning quality	Significant variation; weak pedagogy	Improving consistency; some effective practice	Consistently good; QA identifies strengths and areas to refine	Exemplary practice; used for training others
	Curriculum coherence & impact	Fragmented or reactive; lacks progression	Some coherence; improvement plan underway	Clear intent and sequencing; implemented well	Leading innovation; contributes to MAT-wide curriculum
Pupil Outcomes	Progress & attainment	Well below national; declining trends	Gaps closing slowly; trajectory improving	Inline or above national; sustained progress	Consistently high outcomes; closing gaps innovatively
	Disadvantaged / SEND outcomes	Significant gaps; provision not effective	Strategies in place but impact variable	Targeted approaches; improving trends	Equitable outcomes; evidence of narrowing gaps
Behaviour, Attitudes & Culture	Behaviour and attendance	High exclusions; low attendance; unsafe culture	Improving behaviour systems; pockets of disruption remain	Calm, respectful culture; good attendance	Strong culture of excellence; pupils self-regulate
	Safeguarding practice	Compliance concerns; weak culture of vigilance	Systems improving; some inconsistencies	Robust processes; responsive and monitored	Strong safeguarding culture; trains others
Staff Development & Capacity	Workforce stability & morale	High turnover; low morale; lack of collaboration	Workforce stabilising; CPD inconsistently applied	Embedded CPD; stable workforce	Capacity to coach, mentor and lead externally
	Leadership pipeline	No internal pipeline; reliance on external appointments	Early talent identification; ad hoc opportunities	Clear leadership progression; internal appointments	Grows leaders for Trust; leads leadership programmes
Trust Engagement & Impact	Responsiveness to Trust support	Resistant or disengaged	Engaged but reliant	Responsive and proactive	Provides support across Trust; contributes to strategy



Domain	Observable Feature	Stabilise	Repair	Sustain	Innovate
	Contribution to school-to-school support	Not yet appropriate	Receives support from others	Participates in clusters; shares practice	Leads clusters; mentors other leaders

- o This framework will be used in **combination with performance data, QA reports, and dialogue with school leaders.**
- o A school doesn't need to meet *every single Innovate descriptor* to be placed in that tier — decisions should reflect **dominant characteristics.**
- o Final tiering will be agreed collaboratively between the Trust executive and the school's leadership team.

Below is a detailed framework showing how each phase interacts with the Trust strategy, with tailored approaches for schools at each level of need

Adaptive School Improvement Strategy by Stage of School Development

School Stage	Definition	Primary Focus	Adapted Support Approach	Monitoring & QA
Stabilise	Significant academic underperformance, low expectations, leadership instability/concerns, safeguarding/behaviour concerns Ofsted category of RI or below	Secure leadership, routines, safeguarding, staff retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Direct CEO/Director involvement ➤ Partner with strong school and executive head ➤ Limit change to high-leverage actions ➤ External SIP for half termly support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Fortnightly check-ins CEO/DTL ➤ Weekly data drop (attendance, behaviour) ➤ Monthly Trust QA visit
Repair	Emerging from crisis/stabilising, but with gaps in teaching, curriculum, or staffing	Teaching consistency, curriculum foundations, culture reset	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Assigned cluster mentor or peer school support ➤ Focused CPD (e.g. behaviour, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Half-termly peer review ➤ Leadership coaching ➤ Termly review with CEO



School Stage	Definition	Primary Focus	Adapted Support Approach	Monitoring & QA
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> early reading) ➤ Medium-term action plan aligned to Trust priorities ➤ Deploy internal specialists 	
Sustain	Secure core offer, stable leadership, improving outcomes	Embed quality first teaching, develop subject leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Contribute to school-to-school support ➤ Lead a curriculum group or moderation session ➤ CPD matched to school improvement goals ➤ Participate in cross-school working groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Self-evaluation led ➤ Cluster review cycle ➤ Termly review of KPi areas
Innovate	High performance, strong leadership, consistently good outcomes	Drive innovation, trust-wide contribution, research-led practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Designate as a T&L mentor school ➤ Pilot new trust initiatives ➤ Host CPD and coaching programmes ➤ Contribute to trust-wide leadership development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Annual MAT peer review ➤ Showcase reviews for Board ➤ Contribute to QA of others



How the Core Strategy Adjusts per Tier

Strategic Element	Stabilise/Repair	Sustain/Innovate
Cluster Structure	Receiver of support, paired with strong peer	Support provider, mentor role
QA Cycle	Increased frequency, more directive	Self-evaluation led, collaborative
CPD Involvement	Receives targeted CPD	Designs/delivers trust CPD
Leadership Role	Leadership coaching focus	Succession planning and coaching others
Director of T&L	Close curriculum/QA support	Strategic innovation advisor
CEO	Oversight, capacity injection	Strategic development, external networking



Appendix 1:

The following implementation plan for our School Improvement Strategy is aligned with the capacity of our central team, the tiered school development model, and a school-to-school support approach.

Trust School Improvement Strategy – Implementation Plan

Year 1 (2025–26): Foundation and Alignment

Term	Milestones & Activities	Lead	Comments:
Autumn 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch strategy with HTs and LGBs • Categorise schools by tier • Form clusters for collaboration • Issue QA calendar and reporting cycle 	CEO / Dir. of T&L	Categorisation should include Head + Trust agreement
Autumn 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate first peer support pairings • Launch CPD programme • Begin QA visits (focus on Stabilise/Repair) 	Dir. of T&L	Targeted CPD for lower-tier schools
Spring 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid-year reviews with HTs • LGB tier briefing + governor dashboard training • Coaching for HTs in Stabilise/Repair 	CEO / Dir. of T&L	HT coaching initiated for priority schools
Spring 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer reviews (led by Sustain/Innovate schools) • Subject networks launch • CPD impact evaluation 	Dir. of T&L	Emphasise subject leadership development
Summer 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep dive trust QA visits • School-led CPD contributions (pilot from Innovate schools) • Review support pairings 	Dir. of T&L / HTs	Pilot Trust CPD delivery by high-performing schools
Summer 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual evaluation of strategy • Re-tier schools • Present outcomes to Trust Board and LGBs • Identify next year's priorities 	CEO / Dir. of T&L	Focus on impact stories and data-led analysis



Year 2 (2026–27): Embedding and Expansion

Term	Milestones & Activities	Lead	Comments:
Autumn 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New CPD calendar with more internal delivery • Formalise T&L Hubs led by Innovate schools • Launch leadership development pathway (aspiring leaders) 	Dir. of T&L / Hub leads	Identify facilitators for internal NPQ-style delivery
Autumn 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust-wide curriculum review • LGB performance audit • First MAT-wide “improvement learning day” 	CEO / Dir. of T&L	Showcase best practice across schools
Spring 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External peer review (inc external SIP as appropriate) • Evaluate leadership pipeline impact 	CEO	Add external perspective to internal QA
Spring 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tier progression planning • Publish school-level improvement journeys 	CEO / HTs	Share how schools have moved tiers
Summer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review sustainability of cluster model • Update strategy document • Plan next phase (e.g. digital innovation, SEND transformation) 	CEO	Begin scaling next improvement focus

Ongoing Structures (All Year)

Feature	Frequency	Purpose
Headteacher Forum	Monthly	Collaborative problem-solving, trust-wide alignment
Cluster Meetings	Half-termly	Peer review, moderation, curriculum planning
Trust QA Cycle	Termly (min.)	Learning walk, book look, data review, pupil voice



Feature	Frequency	Purpose
Governor Briefings	Termly	Focused on improvement tier, progress and risks
Trust CPD	Monthly/Twilight/PD Days	Curriculum, pedagogy, behaviour, leadership
Executive Coaching	Fortnightly/monthly (targeted)	HTs in Stabilise/Repair tiers



Appendix 2:

Role of Local Governing Bodies (LGBs) in School Improvement

Local Governing Bodies (LGBs) play a vital role in driving and sustaining school improvement at a local level. Within the Trust's governance structure, LGBs act as a key layer of strategic support and local accountability, ensuring that each school remains focused on high standards of education, inclusion, and pupil welfare.

While ultimate accountability rests with the Trust Board, LGBs are empowered to challenge, support and monitor the effectiveness of their school's leadership, aligned with the Trust's school improvement framework.

Core Responsibilities of LGBs in Improvement

1. Monitoring Educational Standards

- Review progress against school improvement plan and Trust-wide priorities.
- Scrutinise attainment and progress data with a focus on closing gaps (e.g. SEND, disadvantaged).
- Ensure the school is responding effectively to internal QA findings and Ofsted and SIAMS recommendations.

2. Challenging and Supporting Leadership

- Hold the Headteacher to account for the quality of teaching, curriculum implementation, and pupil outcomes.
- Offer constructive challenge to the school leaders based on data and contextual insight.
- Ensure leaders are acting on feedback from peer reviews, trust QA, and staff surveys.

3. Safeguarding, Attendance and Inclusion

- Monitor key indicators related to safeguarding, attendance, behaviour, and exclusions.
- Ensure the school is meeting its statutory duties for SEND, Pupil Premium, and vulnerable groups.
- Champion inclusive practice and well-being across the school.

4. Oversight of Improvement Tier and Trajectory

- Understand the school's current improvement tier (**Stabilise, Repair, Sustain, Innovate**) and the implications for support.
- Monitor progress toward moving to a higher tier or sustaining excellence.
- Escalate risks or barriers to improvement to the Trust executive or Board.

5. Community Engagement and Ethos



- Ensure the school's values and vision reflect the community it serves while aligning with the Trust's overarching vision and values.
- Provide insight into community needs and perceptions that can inform improvement efforts.

6. Governance Development

- Engage in regular training (e.g. Prevent, curriculum, safeguarding).
- Participate in trust-led governor forums to share learning and best practice.
- Review governance effectiveness annually as part of the Trust's QA cycle.

Escalation and Reporting

LGBs are expected to:

- Raise concerns about school performance or leadership capacity directly with the CEO.
- Report formally to the Trust Board through minutes and termly summary reports.
- Contribute evidence and insights during external reviews (e.g. Ofsted, peer reviews).





In Summary, LGBs are active contributors to the Trust's improvement system. Through focused, informed governance at their local level, they ensure that each school is held to high standards, is well supported, and remains committed to delivering the best possible outcomes for all pupils.