

SAND Academies Trust

Our Strategic Plan 2021 - 2026



SAND
ACADEMIES TRUST

Supporting Achievement and Nurturing Development



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Welcome from the Chair of the Board

Welcome to SAND Academies Trust! As a young trust we are focused in supporting schools to enable the best education and care possible, within the resources available.

As an organisation, we exist for the benefit of all our young people, no matter their background or circumstance. We have ensured that we have a stable financial position and a sustainable future.

We continue to invest wisely in the education of our children and young people, develop quality central services to support our schools to focus on the quality of education and also in our buildings and wider infrastructure. Lastly, we are striving to support a culture that promotes our common purpose clearly and where the individual character and personality of our schools is maintained.

We are committed to improving further and we are aware that we still have a journey to make.

This strategy reflects the next stage of this journey and I am delighted to share our vision for the future with you.

Kerry Brimfield
Chair of Trust Board
SAND Academies Trust



Welcome to SAND Academies Trust strategic plan which sets out our current and future thinking about how we will develop as a Trust to become the schools of choice, employer of choice and the Trust of choice.

SAND stands for Supporting Achievement and Nurturing Development; this underpins all that we do. This strategic plan has been developed to be both purposeful and useful so that it can be used regularly to guide our growth and development over the next 5 years and beyond.

SAND Academies Trust was incorporated on 1st June 2019, with founder schools The Milestone (sponsor academy) and Paternoster School. Battledown Centre for Children & Families joined the trust in April 2020, followed by Belmont School in June 2020. We were delighted to have our first mainstream primary, Willow Primary Academy, join the trust in April 2021 which incorporates a 20-place Communication and Interaction unit. From January 2021, the unit will expand to a 30-place primary Specialist Resource Centre.

The driving vision for the establishment of the trust was to create a group of 'like-minded' schools working collegiately, with children and young people at the centre of everything we do. We strive to support each other through sharing of expertise across our schools and maintaining the individual identity of the schools within their local community.

This strategy sets out our vision for 2026. It aims to focus on school improvement that includes providing high quality education and wellbeing support for pupils, support for families, excellent partnership working and growing our own leaders and expert classroom practitioners. It also sets out our aim to become a strong organisation where our people feel valued, with the opportunity to contribute towards our wider organisational success.





We will utilise the combined power of our Multi Academy Trust to ensure the best possible education. One which includes access to the best quality teaching and learning, an aspirational and inclusive curriculum, a caring and supportive learning environment and a wide range of opportunities for pupils to develop their own values, character and cultural capital. Ultimately, it is our promise that we will create a place where all children and young people, no matter what their background or circumstance, gain the skills, knowledge, qualifications and experiences they need to succeed in their post school life and to positively contribute towards society.

Underpinning the trust is a growing strong central team and a wide core central services offer which strives to ensure efficiency and facilitate more time for leaders in school to focus on the quality of education.

We are immensely proud that we are a growing the trust during challenging times due to a global pandemic. Throughout this time, our staff, pupils and families have had to lead, work and learn in new ways and in difficult circumstances, such as remaining open during lockdowns and home learning.

We consider our staff as the best resource we have, and we strive to support and build our talented and dedicated workforce. This strategy outlines how we will ensure our staff are developed, listened to and cared for in order that they can support our pupils, and each other, to thrive. We aim to support the wellbeing of our staff and will develop our employment offer moving forwards.

At SAND Academies Trust it is important to us that our schools sit at the heart of their communities. We want our schools to be available to the local community through lettings for social/leisure opportunities and as respite centres for our pupils. We will work hard to ensure leaders across our trust lead ethically, morally, and sustainably by looking at the wider impact of our provision on our communities, utilising research and best practice to inform our decisions and by sharing of the best of what we do with others from across the sector. We resolutely believe that our schools are 'stronger together' and that, by working together and learning together, we can achieve our vision statement and be outstanding together.

What we do

Our aim is to deliver an outstanding education for all students, staff and stakeholders. We do this through an ethos of collegiality which wholeheartedly places students at the centre of all we do and every decision we make.

Inclusion is at the heart of all we do as a trust. Our students show a high level of care for each other and respect each other's diversity. We do not allow disadvantage to be a barrier to learning and we support all our students to be the very best.

Whilst we share good practice across our schools and have agreed common principles to align our teaching and learning provision, curriculum provision and behaviour systems, we also recognize the need for every schools to have autonomy in providing what is right for their communities.

We have strong parental engagement in our schools and value the work of the Local Advisory Boards and the role they play in maintaining each school's identity. Leaders, teachers and support staff within the trust work closely together and there are increasing opportunities across the year to bring them together to share best practice.

Each school had a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme for staff. Through our new SAND Training & Outreach service, we will enhance the CPD offer and establish clear CPD pathways for teaching staff, support staff, central support staff, leaders, local governors and trustees.



Our commitment

We take our responsibility for the education, safety and wellbeing of children and young people very seriously and are committed to playing our part in developing a quality educational provision across Gloucestershire, and beyond.

- ❖ As a partnership we will achieve more together and therefore:
 - ❖ Improve outcomes, opportunities and life chances for children and young people
 - ❖ Offer more / wider support for their families
 - ❖ Share and develop staff expertise
- ❖ We will create a trust which is child-centred, giving children and young people, families and carers a voice.
- ❖ Through collaboration we will challenge and maximise potential for our schools and individuals.
- ❖ We will ensure the individual identity of each school.
- ❖ We will develop a climate which is open to change and development.
- ❖ We will shape the future by influencing services and provisions.
- ❖ Individuals will be empowered to make decisions using research-based evidence to ensure the quality of education has sound intent, clear implementation and accountable impact.
- ❖ Community engagement will be embedded in learning experiences, both the local community of the provision and the children and young people.
- ❖ Opportunities and activities will be guided to support transitions for future learning and employment.
- ❖ Skills and knowledge of all employees will be utilised to improve educational outcomes for children and young people regardless of the accommodation where they are placed.

Our Aims

To provide the best possible education for children and young people, including those with additional and complex needs, in both mainstream and special schools.

To achieve excellence through innovation, creativity and continuous improvement

To direct the maximum resources available to the trust's schools, facilitating and servicing high standards

To build formal and informal partnerships across Gloucestershire and beyond

To develop a trust which is outward looking and enterprising

To support, challenge and improve underperforming schools

To develop multi-agency working practices

To utilise internal and external providers in the pursuit of excellence based upon our pupil need

To utilise the skills and experience of staff and leaders across the trust to the best advantage of the children and young people

To develop children and young people's independence skills and support families to take part in a parallel journey with their child and they prepare for adulthood

To provide an environment where staff can continually develop and progress their careers

To maximise value for money by continued attention to costs and streamlining and centralizing working practices where appropriate

To play a strategic role across the region by linking with other organisations such as GAPH, GASH, GASSH, G15, GSP, National Star College, University of Gloucestershire, Gloucestershire College, SGS Stroud College, training providers (Prospects and Bridge), Parent Carers (Face 2 Face), Forwards Employment, GFirst LEP, local businesses and voluntary sector organisations

Strategy for 2021 - 2026

Our strategy is an ambitious vision for the future. It aims to set out a roadmap for the next five years and will be used to inform our annual strategic evaluation and planning process.

It also aims to set out a broader vision for the future beyond 2026 and sets out our commitment to achieving our broader charitable goals.

At the time of writing this strategy, the world is in the midst of a global pandemic. Whilst our strategy will aim to capitalize on the benefits from this; greater opportunities for collaboration, developments in the use of ICT which will save time, workload and money and changes to the operating models of our schools; the future economic and social impact of this on schools and the wider society are still uncertain. As such, this strategic plan will be reviewed along the way as we respond to these challenges and changes and as we grow and improve as an organisation. One thing is certain though, that by working together and learning together we will be stronger together and by doing so, will stand a greater chance of achieving our mission statement.



Our Ambition & Guiding Principles

Our organisation grew in 2 years from 2 to 5 schools. During this first phase of our development, we have focused upon establishment of the organisation through implementation of robust policies, practices, systems and processes upon which our future success could be built. This work is still in progress with the need for further development and reviews of impact.

The next stage of our journey will provide us with an opportunity to review and refine the practice and structures we have put in place to ensure we are as successful, efficient and effective as we can be. But, in order to become a truly great organisation, the second phase of our development also needs to be aspirational.

The following principles will guide our strategy for the next stage of our development:

- Deliver excellence in leadership, teaching, learning, assessment and curriculum design across the trust.
- Refine and cement the foundations of the trust including being clear about our collective objectives, finances and support capacity.
- Pursue development opportunities (eg: respite provision, nursery and post-16) where they make viable sense to the trust
- Continue to converse with schools interested in joining the trust (or suggested by the RSC), proceeding only when due diligence supports a good match and fits with the trust's capacity to ensure the process is smooth.
- Engineer a change management activity to move the culture of SAND to one that ensures each employee is clear that they are part of SAND Academies Trust and contributing to our collective effort.
- Develop a central programme to develop the skills of our staff and an environment where they consider they are working for an employer of choice. Part of this is to grow our external reputation.
- Develop a set of succession plans both for the executive and for individual schools to ensure we have the skills we need both in use and in reserve. This will also be a talent management activity.
- Ensure we are a 'Learning Trust' that utilizes research and development to inform practice across all areas of the organisation.
- Invest in our capital programmes in a way that prioritises the most immediate challenges but without losing sight of any beneficial growth opportunities.
- Seek to engage with other MATs to understand their journey and to glean any useful information that would ease our way.

Our Vision for 2026

We will deliver on our vision for 2026 through the delivery of three key priorities: to be the **schools of choice**, the **employer of choice** and the **trust of choice**.

In order to achieve the vision, we will focus on three strategic objectives, which capture our strategy for 2021 to 2026.

Each objective has associated targets and key indicators against which performance towards these targets will be measured.

Objective 1: To secure outstanding educational provision in all of our schools so that all of our children and young people are happy, cared for and want to learn, succeed and grow.

**Schools
of choice**

**Trust of
choice**

**Employer
of choice**

Objective 3: To maintain and develop our position as a secure and viable trust that creates a place where schools and communities can thrive, through which we positively impact upon the wider education system.

Objective 2: To further develop our offer to support and develop our staff and create an environment within which they feel valued and cared for.