

School Improvement Strategy

Background

This policy document sets out how Pele Trust will operate to bring about sustained and substantial improvement in all of our schools, which is our core business. Our approach will be underpinned by our clearly stated purpose, ambition and values.

Schools joining Pele Trust will do so with the aim of improving and supporting each other so that each school can become outstanding. The school improvement professionals in our schools are the Senior Leadership Teams. They are responsible for driving the improvement within their own school but also share responsibility for improvement in all our schools by working collaboratively in a spirit of mutual support.

Where concerns are raised about a school (see Categories of school effectiveness), the Trust has a duty to intervene in order to ensure that progress is made. In line with the Scheme of Delegation, this could result in an Academy Committee becoming an Academy Council, thus reducing its delegated powers.

Purpose

- To build a learning community, brought together by choice, that enables our schools to support and challenge each other to provide consistently outstanding education whilst offering a stable pathway for students, parents and staff
- To have an influential voice and be instrumental in contributing to the development and enrichment of education in the north-east of England

Ambition

- To be a learning community where strong relationships ensure that everyone ...
 - is happy
 - learns and improves
 - is known well and valued for who they are
 - is included and listened to
 - is fulfilled
 - feels safe and secure
 - promotes health and well being
 - consistently experiences a rich, stimulating and challenging learning environment
 - experiences a broad and balanced curriculum including a varied enrichment offer

- strives for excellence in all they do
- receives high quality and timely advice, support and guidance
- treats others with respect, dignity and courtesy at all times
- contributes positively to the improvement of all of our schools
- recognises the important partnership between parents and school
- achieves exceptionally well from their individual starting points

Values

We will seek to uphold and model the Nolan principles of public life, namely:

- Selflessness
- Integrity
- Objectivity
- Accountability
- Openness
- Honesty
- Leadership

In addition we are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all and approaching our work with optimism

Scope

This policy applies to all the schools and academies within Trust.

Sections

The School Improvement Strategy is set out in discrete sections under the following headings:

1. Levels of monitoring
2. Lines of accountability
3. Categories of school effectiveness
4. Quality assurance/self evaluation processes and monitoring cycle
5. Support mechanisms
6. Talent register
7. Conflict resolution

Section 1: Levels of monitoring

The main responsibility for school improvement rests with the individual Headteacher and school Senior Leadership Team. Pele Trust will seek to operate in a collaborative manner to support and challenge schools to continually improve. We see monitoring taking place at four discrete levels:

Level 1:	Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team
Level 2:	Academy Committee/Council
Level 3:	Pele Trust Executive Team (CEO; Deputy CEO; School Improvement Lead)
Level 4:	Board of Directors

Link in with Scheme of Delegation

Section 2: Lines of accountability

The role of the Headteacher becomes even more multi-faceted within a Multi Academy Trust model. As is the case currently, Headteachers report to their Academy Committee (previously Governing Bodies) who act as the second layer of monitoring to provide assurances that the school continues to offer a good level of education to all pupils. This will involve reviewing school practices, analysing internal and external school data and directly engaging with staff and pupils within the school day.

Headteachers will be line managed by the CEO, and accountable to the Board of Directors for the overall performance of their schools. The appraisal of each Headteacher will be carried out by the CEO, supported by a sub-group of Academy Committee/Council members.

The CEO will be line managed by, and accountable to, the Board of Directors for the overall performance of all Trust schools.

SIP process? Where does this fit? NCC SLA - conflict of interest of information as NCC QA the process. £3000 per school for:

- SIP
- Data Unit access
- Governor training
- Ofsted support

Section 3: Categories of school effectiveness

The plan is to agree primary school categories in July and secondary schools in September.

GREEN	<p>Schools performing well, which may include those that are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recently judged as securely 'good' or 'outstanding' by Ofsted • Likely to be judged 'good' or 'outstanding' based on internal self evaluation • Close to floor standards but with above average progress/value added measures • Remains good in short inspection and/or maybe heading toward outstanding (section 5 within 2 years)
YELLOW	<p>This could include schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recently judged 'still good' by Ofsted but with some concerns identified leading to proposed section 5 within 2 years from short inspection • New Headteacher and/or inexperienced Senior Leadership Team • Judged as 'requires improvement' (RI) by Ofsted but making rapid improvement and/or 'good' for Leadership and Management • Likely to be judged as 'requires improvement' if inspected by Ofsted but making rapid improvement • Below or close to floor standards but making rapid improvement • Uncharacteristic dip in outcomes (1 year) • Where performance is securely above floor standards but not meeting expected standards of comparable schools
AMBER	<p>This could include schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recently judged as 'Requires Improvement' (RI) by Ofsted, and not making rapid improvement • If inspected would be likely to be judged by Ofsted as 'Requires Improvement' - not making rapid improvement • Emerging trends of declining performance from good or outstanding • Where performance is significantly below standards of comparable schools • Identified vulnerabilities causing concern but are showing early signs of improvement • Where most indicators are positive but where the school meets the criteria to be judged as 'coasting' based on 3 years data
RED	<p>Schools causing concern, which may include academies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recently judged to require an Ofsted category (Special Measures or Serious Weaknesses) • Likely to be judged inadequate if inspected by Ofsted • In receipt of a Warning Letter from the Regional Schools Commissioner • Failing to respond sufficiently to Trust support with appropriate urgency • Requiring significant improvement with limited capacity to improve • Consistently below national floor standards • Close to or below national floor standards and not making rapid improvement • Year on year decline in performance (3 years)
URGENT ACTION	<p>For any school at any time where there are other serious concerns, which will affect outcomes for children including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where there are serious financial concerns including financial impropriety • Where there are safeguarding concerns • Where there is a breakdown in discipline and behaviour • Where there is inadequate leadership and management practices • Number of qualifying complaints from parents/staff • Long term absence of HT/DHT

Section 4: Quality assurance/self evaluation processes & monitoring cycle

We will make use of a range of approaches to ensure that we have an accurate view of all Pele Trust schools. The table below sets out a range of strategies with a proposed timescale for each.

Strategy	Frequency
<p>Peer reviews Each school will have a regular Peer Review as part of a health check. The team reviewing a school will be comprised of senior and middle leaders supported by CEO/Deputy CEO and/or School Improvement Lead. The number of days and size of team will be dependent on a range of criteria including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● School category ● Time since last Ofsted inspection ● School size 	Every 18 months
<p>Executive Team meetings The CEO, Deputy CEO and School Improvement Lead will meet half termly to review school performance and Trust priorities. As required they will invite the following to attend:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Individual Headteachers ● Trust Data Manager ● Chief Financial Officer 	Half termly
<p>Headteacher (HT) Board meetings All school Headteachers will meet monthly to provide support and challenge. These meetings will enable schools to focus on strategic priorities.</p>	Fortnightly
<p>Data captures Each school needs to maintain a focus on pupil outcomes therefore we expect key data to be collected at the end of every half term</p>	Termly
<p>Data Dashboard The Trust Data Manager will provide a termly Dashboard setting out school performance against set criteria to be shared with all schools, Academy Committees and Directors</p>	Termly
<p>Strategic priorities We will set 1-2 Pele Trust strategic priorities that will be in place for 3 years. In addition each school will identify 2-3 specific priorities based on their school self evaluation</p>	Annually
<p>School Commitment planning</p>	Annually

<p>Each school will provide a detailed Commitment Plan outlining how they intend to tackle their strategic priorities. This will be recorded on the agreed planning template.</p>	
<p>Headteacher reports (to Academy Committees) We will use a common template for HT reports to ensure consistency of approach. These reports will be written for the Academy Committee and will also be shared with the CEO/Deputy CEO (and Directors as required).</p>	<p>3 x per year</p>
<p>School self evaluation form (SEF) Summary SEF to be submitted by October half term and then updated termly and shared with Academy Committee/Council and CEO. CEO will share headlines with Directors.</p>	<p>Annually and updated Termly</p>
<p>Rapid Response Commitment Plans (RRCP) These plans will be developed in response to a school receiving a judgement of Requires Improvement or lower. The plan will be developed by the Executive Team and implemented by the Headteacher. The regularity of review will depend on whether the school is RI or Inadequate.</p>	<p>Half termly (RI) Monthly (In)</p>

Section 5: Support mechanisms

We will operate on the basis of providing individualised support to each school that reflects their needs and priorities for improvement. At the same time, the nature of support will largely reflect the school category (Section 3) with some generic support normally in place. The table below sets out to provide example information on generic support but is not meant to be a checklist to be ticked off or an exhaustive list of possible support.

GREEN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Peer review (annually) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Focus to be agreed by HT/CEO ● Safeguarding review (annually) ● Headteacher appraisal ● Additional support as identified in School Commitment Plan
YELLOW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Peer review (annually) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Whole school focus ○ Additional foci to be agreed by HT/CEO as required ● Safeguarding review (annually) ● Executive Team review (Termly) ● Headteacher appraisal ● Additional support as identified in School Commitment Plan
AMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Peer review (bi-annually) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Whole school focus ○ Additional foci to be agreed by CEO as required ● Safeguarding review (annually) ● Rapid Response Commitment Plan (RRCP) developed by CEO ● Executive Team review (Half termly) ● Headteacher appraisal ● Additional support as identified in RRCP
RED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Peer review (Termly) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Whole school focus ○ Additional foci to be agreed by CEO as required ● Safeguarding review (bi-annually) ● Rapid Response Commitment Plan (RRCP) developed by CEO ● Executive Team review (Monthly) ● Headteacher appraisal ● Additional support as identified in RRCP
URGENT ACTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Investigate concerns - CEO to commission senior leader from Pele Trust school ● Written report to CEO and Directors with conclusions and recommendations ● Implement Urgent Action Plan

In addition to the more formal support identified in the table above, schools can also call on additional support as follows:

- School Improvement Lead (SIL)
 - Our SIL, Jonathan Brown, can provide bespoke support to schools.
- Internal school-to-school support

- Schools can identify potential support from within the Trust by Headteachers reviewing the Talent Register
- A request for support to target a key priority should be made in writing using the Trust-wide template

Section 6: Talent register/Future Leaders

Pele Trust will set as a priority the identification and development of the most talented staff we have in our schools. The aim is to increase our internal capacity to support school improvement as opposed to be overly reliant on external support mechanisms. At the same time we are keen to 'grow our own' to support effective succession planning as we appoint staff to key middle and senior leadership positions including Headteacher posts.

We will develop a Talent Register that is available to all Headteachers. It will record staff name, current school and post, nature of expertise and support available.

Identified staff will gain access to the support of a Trust Mentor and additional professional development opportunities such as:

- Involvement in Peer Reviews
- Recognised leadership courses
- Internal networking meetings
- Leading small scale projects across the Trust
- Working with senior leaders/Headteachers on key initiatives
- Placements in partner schools (short term)

The Talent Register will be updated annually with a Headteacher nomination being a starting point for consideration by the Executive Team (CEO/Deputy CEO/SIL). The next steps following a nomination include:

1. The Headteacher will complete a Pele Trust reference template for the nominated member of staff
2. Members of the ET will agree a mutually convenient time to visit the school to observe the member of staff and conduct a semi-formal interview
3. If successful, the CEO will provide a formal written offer of a place on the register

Section 7: Conflict resolution

There may be times when the view of the school differs from that of the Executive Team (CEO, Deputy CEO, School Improvement Lead); most likely this will be in relation to the 'Categories of school effectiveness' (Section 3). In this situation the Chair of the Academy Committee may submit a written request for a meeting with key individuals to discuss the matter; the submission should clearly outline the schools concerns/contradictions.

The meeting will provide an opportunity for both sides to present their case with accompanying evidence. The final decision will sit with the Chair of the Board of Directors, who will weigh up all evidence and views before coming to a final decision.