

August 2017

Part one: Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the Trust's commitment of: **'Learning together – making a difference'** is a reality. This will be realised by constantly working towards each academy being autonomous and self-improving, where the Principal and staff inspire pupils, drive school improvement and achieve the best performance and highest levels of equity.

The documents and processes in the accompanying handbook are intended to assist academy leaders with their ongoing self-evaluation. In no way are they intended to replace academy-specific monitoring and evaluation. They are simply a way of summarising self-evaluation and provide the basis for ongoing support, challenge and dialogue with Trust staff.

The Trust's commitment is exemplified through the Focus-Trust Charter in annex 1 and makes clear the expectations for:

- Leaders, including governors
- Staff
- Parents and carers
- Teaching and the curriculum

The Commitment and Charter are linked to the Trust's model for academy improvement which is outlined in annex 2. This model is included as a reminder that the heart of making a difference in a school is about ensuring that the quality of teaching and the quality of relationships impact to make a positive difference to pupils. It is the core purpose of all staff and governors to ensure that this remains central to the work of the academy.

Academy responsibility

This policy and the work of the Focus-Trust is underpinned by the belief that academy leaders and their staff team should be proactive and take responsibility for ensuring that they meet the needs of all the children in their academy. No member of staff should wait to be 'spoon-fed'. Staff need to show autonomy and proactivity in their approach to, and delivery of, work.

Success criteria

We know that the very best (judged by pupil progress) schools:

- are self-managing with highly effective leadership;
- have consistently good teaching which is sometimes outstanding;
- know what is going on in classrooms;
- look outside their own school for new ideas;
- use data to target improvement;
- have staff who take responsibility for their work and do not make excuses;
- challenge and support, i.e. staff challenge and support each other; accepting this is not the sole responsibility of leaders; and
- engage parents/carers with learning.

Role of the Focus-Trust

It is the role of the Focus-Trust to:

- challenge;
- support;
- celebrate success and innovation;
- help academies access support;
- provide additional support and challenge; and
- intervene where there are concerns.

Role of local governing board

It is the role of the local governing board to challenge and support academy leaders to help them realise the Trust's Commitment. The agenda of governors should be the agenda of the academy, i.e. they are appointed to help accelerate progress and raise standards. Governors should not be distracted by issues which are not part of the 'core business'.

Visit preparation

There is an expectation that the Principal will take the lead role in ensuring that all visits by the Trust's Chief Executive and Academy Improvement Partners are effective and efficient by making sure that the correct information and people are available and prepared.

Role of the Trust's Academy Improvement Partner

It is the role of the Academy Improvement Partner to:

- work with the leadership team to evaluate the work of the academy;
- support leaders in their drive for excellence;
- challenge leaders to raise the bar and think differently;
- suggest areas and ideas for improvement;
- advise the Trust Board on the effectiveness of the academy;
- signpost best practice;
- work with staff on all levels to improve the quality of teaching and learning
- deliver CPD as appropriate to individual or groups of staff as necessary
- identify when intervention is necessary; and
- ensure that the academy is prepared for inspection.

Role of the Focus Education Consultant

All Focus-Trust academies receive six days of Focus Education consultancy, bespoke per agreed academy improvement priorities.

It is the role of the Focus Education Consultant to:

- work with the Principal, leadership team, staff and governors to address agreed priorities
- Provide a written Note of Visit to the Principal within three days of the visit
- Provide the Trust with an agreed Note of Visit within one week of the visit
- Inform the Chief Executive/Academy Improvement Partners of any concerns raised during the visit

Trust intervention

Trust intervention will be proportionate based on the success and current evaluation of the academy. The Trust works on the principle that successful schools are self-managing with a little, well-timed, intervention. Where academies are less successful there will be a greater degree of intervention, i.e. the principle of earned autonomy. The Chief Executive provides a termly RAG report to the Trust Board.

The Trust has the right to intervene in any academy at any time; however, it is within the ethos of the organisation to work in a transparent way that embeds partnership and honesty at the

heart of all it does. The Trust will always endeavor to intervene in a proactive and constructive manner. Where formal intervention is required the Principal and Chair of Governors will be notified in writing by the Chief Executive. It would be an exceptional circumstance where such a notification would be a shock; as the Trust will avoid this at all costs in an attempt to ensure that the academy is self-sustaining. Where formal intervention is required a Task Group will be established and monthly meetings held to check on progress towards the academy improvement priorities. Additional support will be outlined which could include:

- consultancy support
- support from another school or academy
- appointment of an executive or associate leader
- deployment of Focus leader, NLE, LLE, SLE
- appointment of additional governors

Where there are leadership concerns the agreed capability procedure will be used.

Way of working

Annex 3 outlines our way of working and establishes the ethos for a professional working relationship.

Annex 1: The Focus-Trust Charter

It is the purpose of the Focus-Trust to continually strive to be a learning organisation, where the learning of all children and adults is valued and promoted. The Focus-Trust Charter is designed to enable this to happen, outlining the behaviours and expectations for everyone.

The Focus-Trust Commitment

'Learning together, making the difference.'

The Focus-Trust Values

Professional honesty is at the heart of everything we do. The Trust knows the academies well because of the strong working partnership between academy leaders and the Trust team. It is only by being honest and transparent with a balance of credible challenge and effective support, that we can move forward and get the best for all children and staff. Our work is underpinned by the following values:

Care for children, adults and the learning environment

Share expertise and best practice for the benefit of all learners

Be **fair**, honest and inclusive – demonstrating integrity

Dare to do things differently and have a go

We expect **learners** to:

- **achieve** well;
- **feel safe and secure** to **take risks** and make mistakes;
- **want to improve** and know how to improve;
- have **high aspirations** and be ready for the next steps in learning and life;
- have **high expectations** of self;
- be **independent, resilient** and **respectful** of self and others;
- be **tolerant** and **open-minded**;
- be **happy** and **confident**;
- have both **independent** and **collaborative learning skills**; and
- be **proud of their community** and know how to contribute to it.

We expect **teaching** and the **curriculum** to:

- challenge, excite and engage;
- be based on prior assessment and use well-judged teaching strategies in order to match individual needs accurately;
- provide constructive feedback to ensure that all children make significant gains in their learning;
- promote independent and collaborative learning;
- promote British values and prepare pupils for life in modern Britain; and
- embed basic skills which are used and applied.

We expect **staff** to:

- take responsibility for pupil outcomes;
- demonstrate high expectations of behaviour, personal development and academic progress;
- create safe and secure learning environments where children and staff feel secure to make mistakes and have a go;
- value and reward both effort and excellence;
- model respect and tolerance;
- enjoy working with children;
- want every child to be the best they can be;
- adopt an aspirational, no excuse, approach to their work;
- ensure learning is challenging for all pupils;
- ensure that parents and carers are respected and treated as partners in learning;
- be proactive, take responsibility and keep up to date; and
- make a difference to the academy.

We expect **parents and carers** to:

- ensure that their child has excellent attendance;
- ensure that their child arrives at school on time and is collected on time;
- support their child with home learning;
- attend meetings with their child's teacher; and
- support the ethos and work of the academy.

We expect **leaders** to:

- be ambitious for the success of the academy and the Trust, showing relentless determination;
- model Focus-Trust behaviours and values;
- ensure that teaching maximises progress;
- hold staff to account for their practice and the outcomes the children achieve;
- take responsibility for the success of the academy;
- take responsibility for the wider success of the Trust and all its children;
- strategically deploy resources to maximise progress;
- challenge, support and develop people;
- work with integrity and respect;
- value diversity and equality;
- work in partnership with the community; and
- value both effort and excellence.

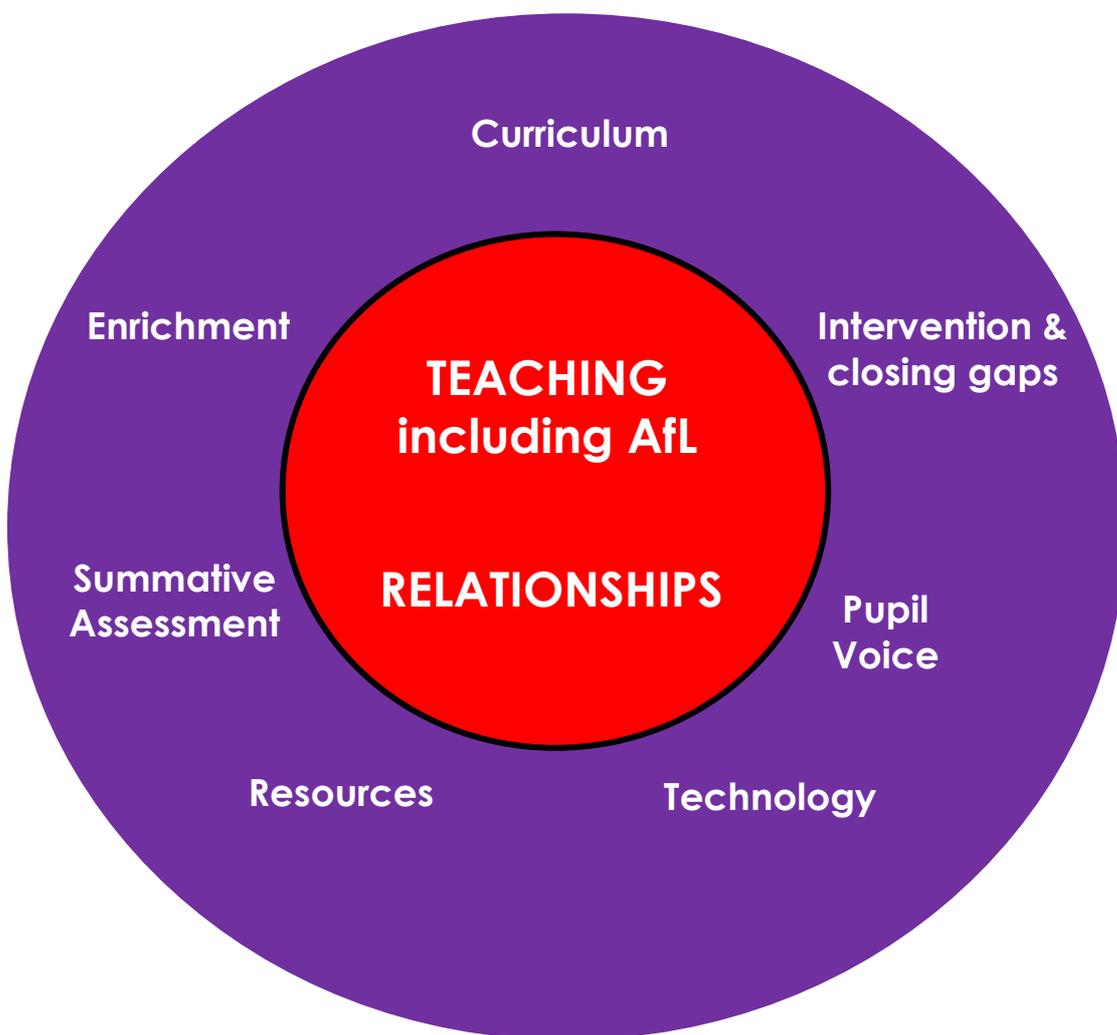
'The quality of an education system cannot exceed
the quality of its teachers'
(McKinsey, 2011)

↓ ↓ ↓ **LEADERSHIP IMPACT** ↓ ↓ ↓

**Management
Systems**

**Learning
Environment**

**Partnership:
Parents & the
Community**



Measured by impact on outcomes		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attainment • Progress • Achievement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance • Value for money 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal development, behaviour and welfare

We know that the very best schools and academies:

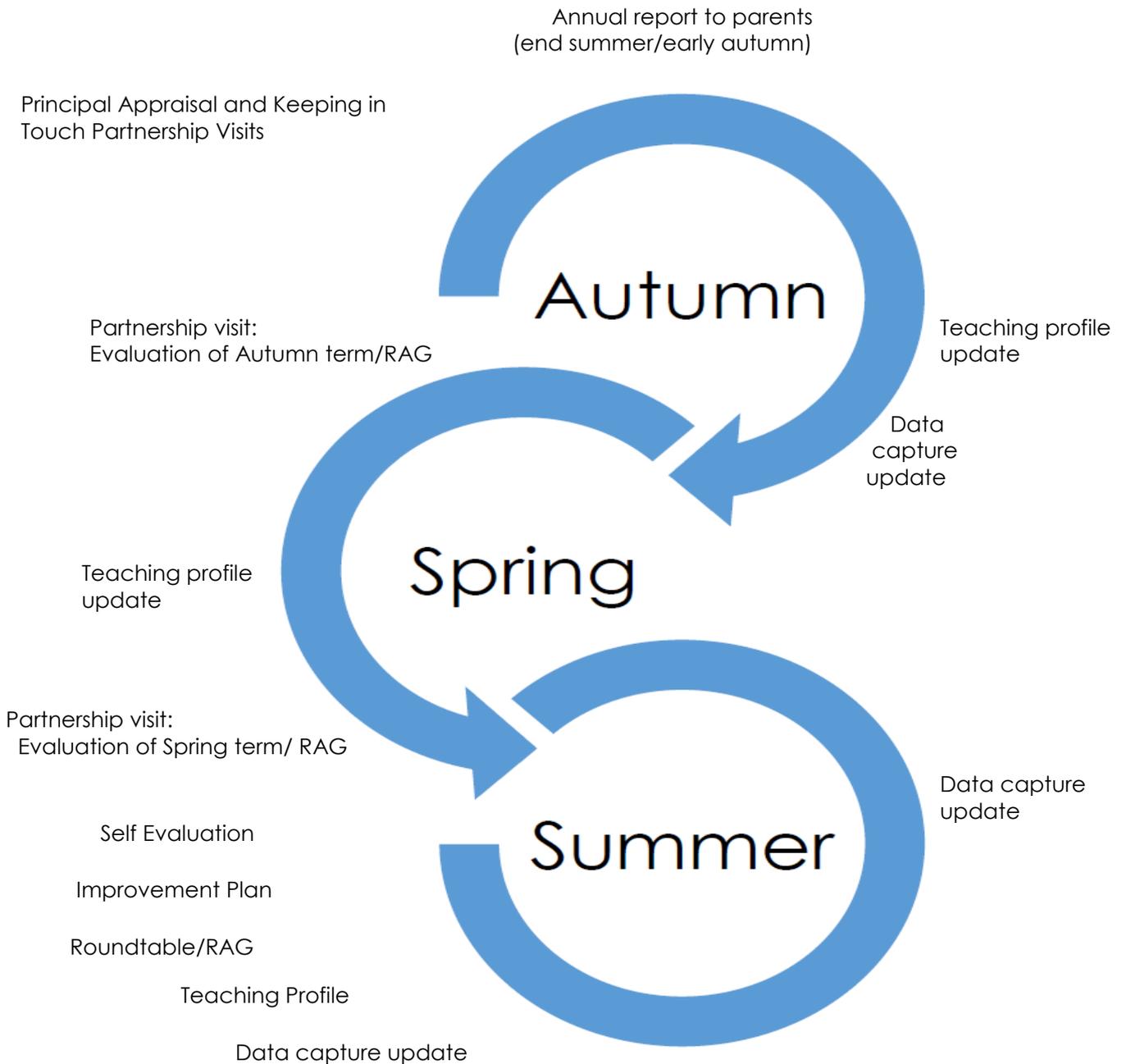
- are self-managing with highly effective leadership;
- have consistently good teaching which is sometimes outstanding;
- know what is going on in classrooms;
- look outside their own school for new ideas;
- use data to target improvement;
- have staff who take responsibility for their work and do not make excuses;
- challenge and support, i.e. staff challenge and support each other; accepting this is not the sole responsibility of leaders; and
- engage parents/carers with learning.

The Trust will:	Academies will:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be transparent about its commitment for success. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all stakeholders understand the commitment and drive of the academy and wider Trust
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure it knows each academy sufficiently well to make well-rounded and effective judgments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be well prepared for meeting and provide the necessary information and evidence to enable well-rounded judgments to be made.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenge and support each academy in a clear and unambiguous way creating an atmosphere of professional respect and trust. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with challenge and support; understanding that it is always geared at ensure the academy is the best it can be.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify, celebrate, share and disseminate effective practice to improve standards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify, celebrate, share and disseminate effective practice to improve standards.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target appropriate support to secure improvement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask for support and raise concerns where appropriate.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have clear processes for identifying where early support is required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the process of early identification. • Engage with support.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intervene and hold school leaders to account. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the Trust's role in intervention • Engage with intervention.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nurture, support and develop leaders in a collegiate atmosphere to recruit and retain excellent people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nurture, support and develop leaders in a collegiate atmosphere to recruit and retain excellent people.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in professional dialogue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in professional dialogue.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that confidentiality is respected. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that confidentiality is respected.

Centrally employed Trust staff will always endeavor to keep appointments within our academies. However, it should be recognised that there are times when events happen that are outside our control which require immediate and/or urgent attention, e.g. unannounced Ofsted inspections, suspension of staff, disciplinary issues etc. Where such events occur, we would ask that a degree of professional understanding is shown.

Part two: Systems and processes

The following documents and processes are the vehicles for academy leaders, Trust personnel and governors to ensure accurate and rigorous self-evaluation based on evidence with next steps for challenge and improvement clearly identified. In no way are these intended as an exhaustive process.



Academies in Special Measures, RI or those requiring additional support and challenge, receive support on a bespoke needs-led basis. This is reviewed on an ongoing basis and discussed with the Board through the termly RAG report.

Assessment Protocols (Section 02)

The Trust collects data using the online O Track system which must be updated half termly in line with the agreed data drop dates. This information can then be accessed through a variety of reports to support self-evaluation. This Trust wide approach enables consistent collection of data, the Central Team to access data without adding to the workload of individual academies and provide updates on Trust wide performance to the Standards Committee. The principles around how this data is gathered and how judgements are made are set out in the Assessment Protocol for EYFS and the Assessment Protocol for Years 1-6.

Headlines of Annual Summary Data (Section 03)

The purpose of this is to enable consistent collection of summative achievement and attainment data annually at the end of the Summer term for discussion at the Roundtable.

Teaching Profile (Section 04)

This is to be completed on an ongoing basis and as a minimum termly. When evaluating teaching and learning, a range of methods will be used including:

- observation of teaching;
- learning walks;
- informal observations;
- scrutiny of work;
- scrutiny of pupil achievement data;
- pupil discussions; and
- scrutiny of planning.

In essence, monitoring and evaluation should triangulate a range of evidence in order to reach a well-rounded 'best-fit' view. There is little point overly relying on formal observations which can present a skewed view of practice. Staff teams, led by academy leaders, need to be clear about the difference that teaching makes each day and not only when observed.

Key Performance Indicators (Section 05)

All academies will provide key performance indicators on a termly basis. This will be used as the basis for partnership visits, discussed by governors and shared with the Trust Board.

Termly Partnership meetings (Section 06)

As an absolute minimum, each academy will have at least three partnership visits per year, more if deemed necessary (including the Roundtable). The purpose of each visit is to:

- identify contextual issues with pupils and staffing;
- identify current strengths and challenges;
- evaluate at least one foci from the improvement plan in detail;
- check attendance data;
- review attainment and progress by cohort;
- review teaching by year group; and
- identify most important actions going forward;

This visit will be reported using the agreed template. The outcome of these visits will be used to provide a summary report to the Trust Board. The summer term visit will take place in the format of a 'roundtable evaluation' (see below).

Roundtable evaluation (Section 07)

The roundtable evaluation can be used in two main contexts:

1. Provide a forum for an annual evaluation of academy improvement (all academies).
2. Provide a forum for an intervention meeting about an underperforming academy.

Purpose - Provide an opportunity for key stakeholders to discuss the overall strengths, weaknesses and next steps for the academy.

Outcome - Written report.
- Consistent information shared between academy leaders, academy governors, Trust board and Trust team.
- Edited version for sharing with Ofsted.

Personnel - Principal and SLT
- Academy Chair of Governors and governors if available
- Chief Executive
- Academy Improvement Partner
- Trustee Advocate
- Others may be invited to contribute as deemed necessary and productive.

Possible agenda items 1. See template

When evaluating leadership in the academy, each evaluation will take account of leadership at all levels. This includes governors, principal, members of the leadership team and all staff as leaders of learning. Leadership will be judged on the impact it has on:

- pupil outcomes
- Personal development, behaviour and welfare
- Teaching, learning and assessment
- spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; and
- capacity for improvement.

Annual Academy Report (for parents and carers) (Section 08)

Following the Roundtable and a comprehensive analysis of end of year data, the Trust will agree a statement for inclusion in the Annual Report to Parents. The Annual Report is written by the Principal. (The timing of the distribution of this is at the discretion of the Principal – end of Summer, start of September)

Ofsted Readiness for Academies and the Trust (Section 9)

The Trust has prepared an Ofsted Readiness Checklist for use prior to and upon receipt of the Ofsted phone call.

Information for Lead Inspectors (Section 10)

The Trust has prepared an Information sheet for Principals to send to Lead Inspectors with key documentation after the Ofsted phone call.

Less is more file content (Section 11)

The Trust has prepared a list that outlines the key documents a Principal should have in a file. A file that leads the inspection by including some key documents which (a) show the inspectors the SLT knows its school and (b) makes it easy for leaders and inspectors.

Self-Evaluation Statement (Section 12)

All academies will undertake ongoing self-evaluation, based on the Ofsted Evaluation Schedule. This will result in a self-evaluation statement, updated at least a termly, the headlines of which are shared with the governing board and discussed at termly partnership visits.

Improvement Plan (Section 13)

All academies will produce an improvement plan, outlining focused and background priorities. Leaders should use the following success criteria (from Ofsted/HMI) as a basis for evaluating improvement plans:

- Clear success criteria for each target (not each action) that are measurable and can be used to hold staff to account
- Clear timescales with interim milestones by which to monitor progress (who, how, when)
- Well sequenced actions identifying who is responsible
- Make clear who is monitoring and how; and who is evaluating and how
- Identifying external evaluation and validation, including the Trust
- Identify the resources required

Improvement plans may be supplemented with specific subject or area plans.

Teaching and Learning Review

Some academies have an annual review of Teaching and Learning with the Chief Executive, Academy Improvement Partner, members of the Principal's Peer Review Group and additional consultants as required. Some academies have a bi annual review depending on the Ofsted cycle. The purpose of this is to work with a range of academy leaders to evaluate teaching and learning, using a variety of methods including:

- Pupil voice;
- observation of teaching and learning
- learning walks;
- scrutiny of work;
- scrutiny of pupil outcomes data;
- parent/carer discussions; and
- scrutiny of planning;

This review will triangulate a range of evidence in order to reach a well-rounded 'best-fit' view of teaching, learning and assessment, pupil outcomes and personal development, behavior and welfare. The evaluation will be used to support the academy's self-evaluation academy and identify strengths and next steps for improvement.