



# TCAT Insight

SERVE CHALLENGE EMPOWER

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## WELCOME

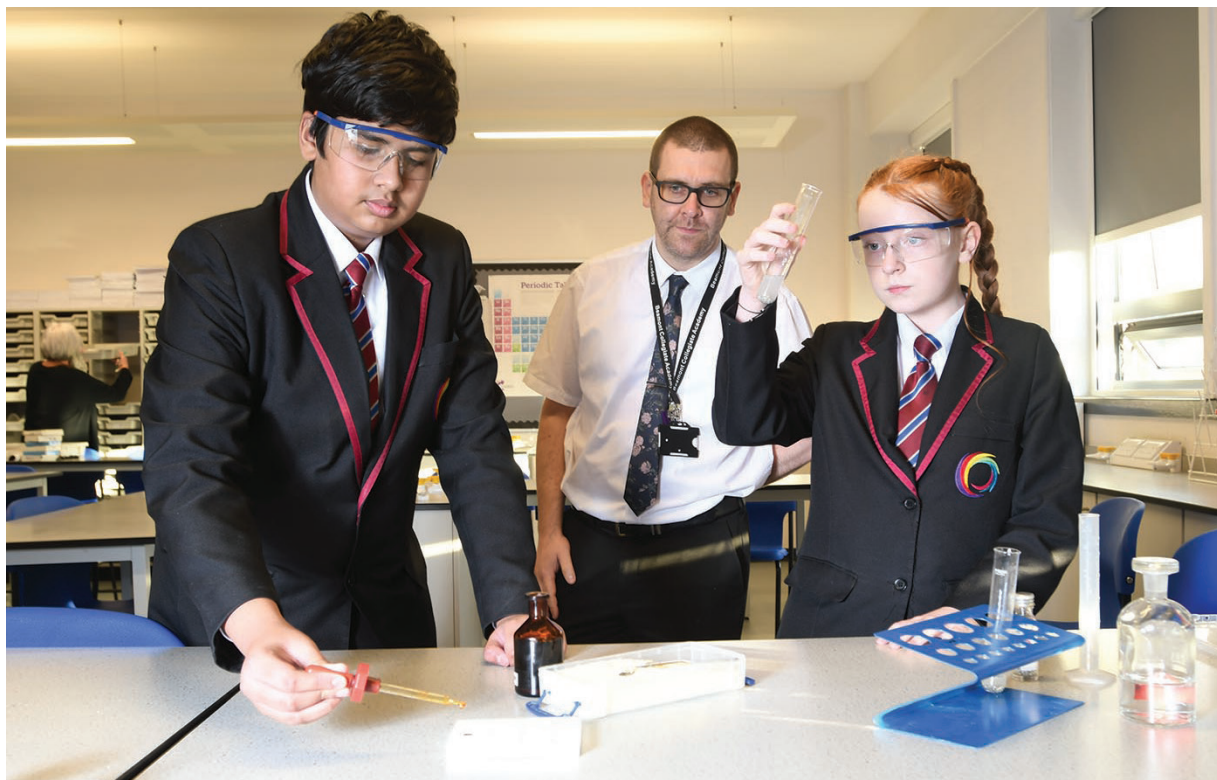
Welcome to The Challenge Academy Trust (TCAT). The aim of this brochure is to provide all stakeholders with a clear understanding of the vision, values, strategic direction and guiding principles of the trust.

It is intended as both a reference tool for staff, governors and TCAT trustees to inform planning and practice. It is also for external stakeholders, such as academy leaders, considering joining or working with TCAT.

We believe a shared understanding of our ambitions, ethos and working practices are crucial to our success, hence the transparent nature of this brochure.



## VISION AND VALUES



The Challenge Academy Trust was formed in 2017 by like-minded leaders of local primary and secondary schools and Priestley 6th Form College to jointly improve outcomes for young people in the Warrington area. Our mission is to *serve, challenge and empower the educational community*. We enact our mission by providing a highly effective service to our academies, supporting strong leadership, investing in the workforce and inspiring our children and young people.

All of our work is underpinned by a set of core values, they are:

- Inclusivity and social justice
- Educational Excellence
- Collaboration and interdependence
- Challenge and service
- Care and sustainability
- Celebrating difference

**These values inform everything we do as a trust and all of our services and working practices are designed around these concepts.**



## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES



Our key strategic objectives are focused around three key dimensions:

- pupils/students
- people
- performance

Our Strategic Action Plan is reviewed by trustees on a regular basis and we set challenging targets focused around each of these dimensions which involve a focus upon pupil outcomes, engagement of vulnerable young people, financial health and sustainability, professional development, well-being and safeguarding amongst other things.

**We are a high performing, successful trust but we are always striving to reflect and improve.**

## ETHOS AND COMMUNITY



TCAT is a unique trust, being the first in the country to include primary and secondary academies together with a Sixth Form College.

TCAT also includes a Church of England High School, Sir Thomas Boteler, whose faith foundation is assured through representation on the trust board from the Dioceses of Chester and Liverpool.

As an inclusive MAT with a strong moral purpose we are committed to providing an environment and education where every young person is nurtured, challenged and inspired to achieve the very best for themselves and their communities. Young people are at the heart of everything we do.

At the same time we are also aware of our responsibilities to local, national and international communities and we strive to work to enhance community cohesion and promote active citizenship through community projects. For example we are actively working with our learners to support local and international charities, to raise awareness of, and where appropriate take action on, environmental issues such as single use plastics and deforestation.

We also strive to promote healthy living and positive well-being for all through an enriched curriculum and partnerships with organisations such as Warrington Wolves, Warrington Association of Schools Sports Partnership and Future in Minds.

## CORE OPERATING PRINCIPLES



We operate around three core principles of collaboration, challenge and continuous professional development or our 3 Cs. These principles apply across the work of our Education Directorate and our Business Support Team.

- **Continuous professional development** is at the heart of our practice and we have an extensive programme of professional development which ranges from Initial Teacher Training right up to Headship qualifications. Our training offer is a combination of externally-accredited qualifications, external providers and internal training provided by colleagues from across the organisation.

**We invest in our staff to ensure they feel valued, develop as practitioners and provide the best outcomes for our young people.**

- **Collaboration** goes much further than simply working together, we aim to create **strength through interdependence** and collective accountability in our working practices. We do not mandate alignment but aim for harmonisation through shared values and goals. Much of this is achieved via our extensive professional hub network.

- **Challenge and support in equal measure** is crucial to our success. We have a comprehensive programme of quality assurance which provides our academies with a 'mirror on themselves' and provides rigorous scrutiny for the trust board. However, this does not happen in isolation and is allied with a detailed professional development programme, access to a huge range of expertise and experience and the support necessary to improve. This is central to our ethos of earned autonomy.





### **Core offer: business support**

A robust, centralised infrastructure to support the back office services required by our academies has evolved since the inception of the trust.

Our business support team currently consists of the following roles and we believe there is sufficient capacity within this team to support future growth.

- Finance Director
- Management Accountant
- 4 x Finance Managers
- Director of operations
- HR Manager
- Teaching School Co-ordinator and admin team
- Continuous Professional Development Lead

The following business support services are provided to all TCAT academies within the management charge:

- Insurance
- Financial management/audit
- HR and payroll
- Estates and capital
- Policy support
- Procurement
- Business support hubs
- Training and support
- Health and safety
- IT
- Safeguarding support and training
- Marketing
- MIS/data support
- Legal services



### **Core offer: education**

The Director of Education and School Improvement Lead operate within the trust managing the accountability framework and also coordinating a wide internal network of challenge and support at all levels. The aim of this directorate is to create a connected autonomy in which we accept strong systems of accountability whilst simultaneously strengthening the organisation through focused collaboration and development.

There is a comprehensive training and professional development offer delivered at our Professional Development Centre via our Education Connect offer. We are able to provide intense, targeted scrutiny where required.

The following offer is afforded to all TCAT academies:

- Academic/pastoral hub membership
- Annual peer review
- Curriculum reviews
- CPD & training at all levels
- Oxford University partnership
- Leadership support
- Coaching & mentoring
- SLE support
- Safeguarding support
- Governor support & training
- Attendance support
- Personal development, behaviour & welfare offer
- Careers guidance offer
- Ofsted support
- Headteacher appraisal
- STEM/Computing training & provision

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



The TCAT Professional Development centre, based at Bridgewater High School, is the centre point for all activities relating to professional collaboration, research, training and staff development. It is a resource which is made available for all TCAT staff to use and is the home to our Initial Teacher Training Programme delivered via our teaching school dimension.

Within our Education Connect offer we deliver training across all career stages from ITT to executive leadership alongside a comprehensive offer of training to support teaching, curriculum development, pastoral work and support staff.

Two TCAT institutions have STEM Assured status and consequently Beamont Collegiate Academy plays host to two regional hubs: the NW hubs for the National Computing Centre of Excellence and for the Science Learning Partnership. These hubs provide nationally-supported and accredited training for colleagues from across the whole region.



## STUDENT PROVISION



We work hard to ensure that students see the value of TCAT and feel part of the trust. We work hard to keep young people at the very heart of what we do.

Consequently there are a number of opportunities and activities which TCAT students can participate in which challenge them and enrich the curriculum. Our cross-phase dimension really comes into its own as the students are able to mix with peers ranging from 3-19 years of age.

Some example of student-facing activities are below:

- Enrichment programme
- Student challenge
- Curriculum pathways
- Environmental campaigning
- Student parliament
- Oxford University events
- Curriculum pathways
- Arts and Sports pathways
- Specialist engineering and technology provision
- Teacher CPD to ensure best outcomes



## ETHICAL LEADERSHIP



We are fully committed to embracing the seven principles of public life to ensure everything we do is in the best interests of the young people and the communities we serve. Consequently, we have adopted the Framework for Ethical Leadership produced by the Ethical Leadership Commission.

This framework promotes virtues such as selflessness and honesty which are hugely important within system leadership when trying to raise standards of professionalism and accountability.

### **Selflessness**

School and college leaders should act solely in the interest of children and young people.

### **Integrity**

School and college leaders must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. Before acting and taking decisions, they must declare and resolve openly any perceived conflict of interest and relationships.





### **Objectivity**

School and college leaders must act and take decisions impartially and fairly, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias. Leaders should be dispassionate, exercising judgement and analysis for the good of children and young people.

### **Accountability**

School and college leaders are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

### **Openness**

School and college leaders should expect to act and take decisions in an open and

transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from scrutiny unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

### **Honesty**

School and college leaders should be truthful.

### **Leadership**

School and college leaders should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles, and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs. Leaders include both those who are paid to lead school and colleges and those who volunteer to govern them.

## OECD CURRICULUM PRINCIPLES



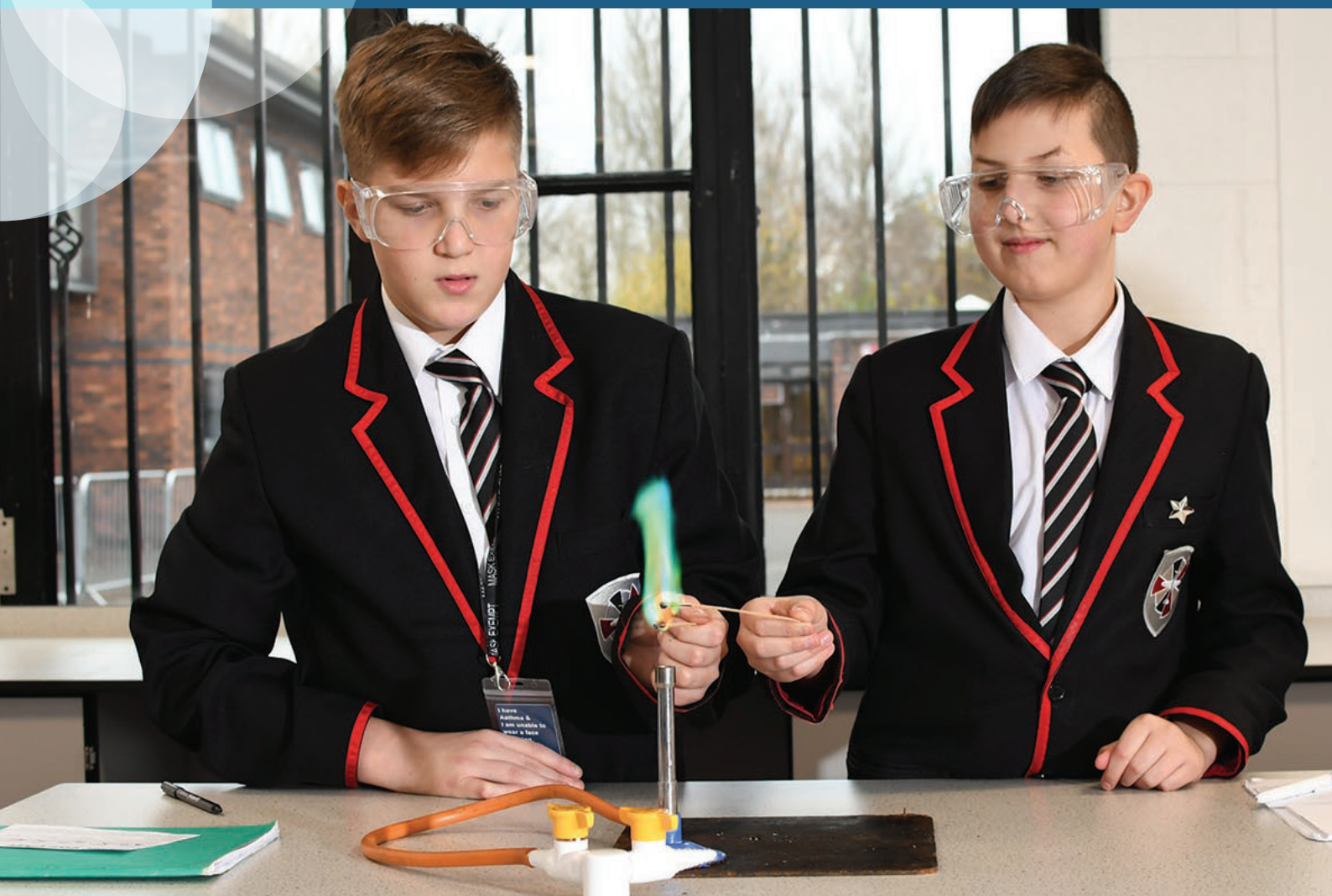
TCAT academies will design and deliver curricular based upon the principles set out in the OECD Learning Framework 2030. We will help every young person develop as a whole person, fulfil his/her potential and contribute towards a future built upon the social and economic well-being of the individual, the local community and the wider world.

Academies within TCAT will provide a broad and balanced curriculum which prepares young people for the social, economic and environmental challenges of modern living. We will encourage our young people to value individual and collective well-

being, prosperity and sustainability. We will promote the knowledge, skills, attitudes, beliefs and values necessary to support future-ready young people who are able to exercise 'learner agency' and to take responsibility for their own education and to participate positively in the world.

We will do this by providing a solid foundation of literacy, numeracy, general knowledge, digital/technological competence, physical health and well-being and enable them to mobilise disciplinary and inter-disciplinary knowledge, cognitive and social skills and attitudes and values to meet complex demands.





### Evidence-informed practice

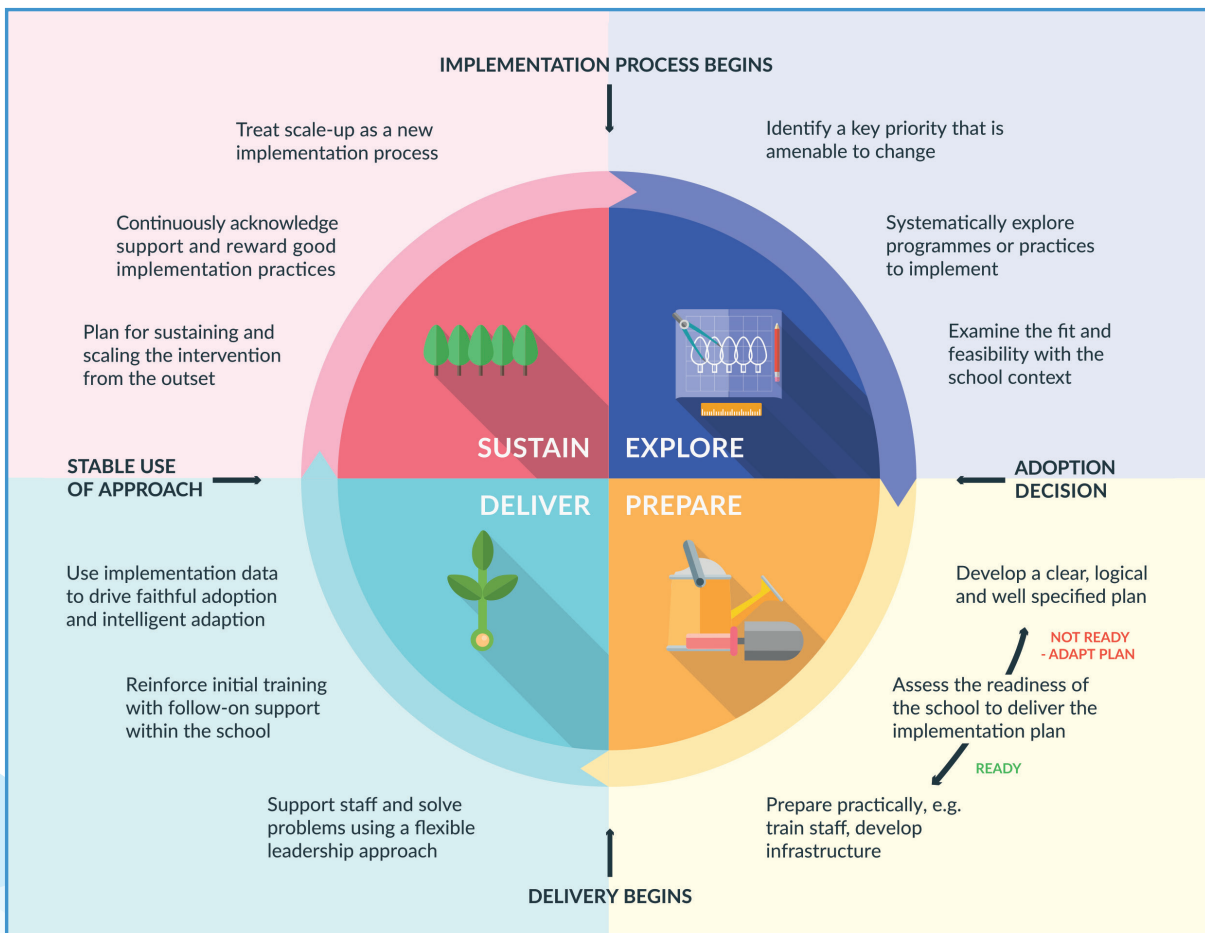
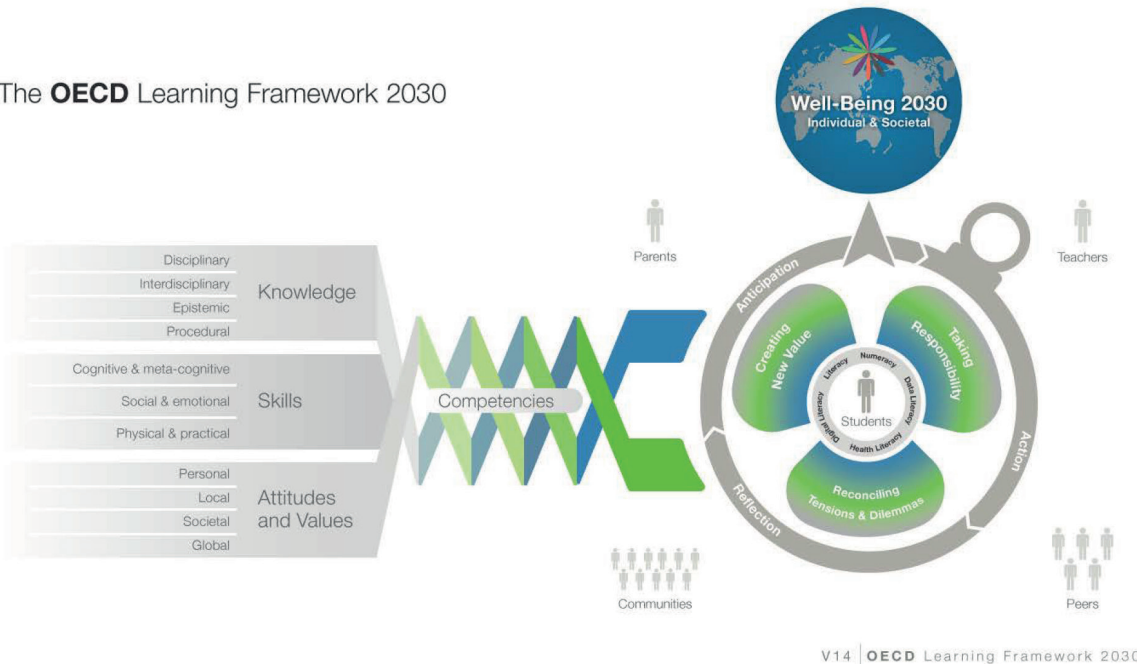
Academies within TCAT will commit to an approach to teaching and learning and educational practice which is based upon evidence-informed practice and credible research. This approach is supported by our partnership with The University of Oxford and Oxnet@TCAT has been established to facilitate these links.

Individual staff, departments, collaborative hubs and schools will commit to the principles of evidence-informed school improvement set out by the Education Endowment Fund in *Putting Evidence to Work: A School's Guide to Implementation* which focuses around:

1. Identifying key priorities and clear success criteria
2. Evaluating different strategies based on evidence
3. Creating the right conditions for successful change
4. Evaluating impact at regular milestones
5. Embedding change

Academies within TCAT will commit to an approach to teaching and learning and educational practice which is also based on the work of Barak Rosenshine and the 10 principles of instruction and suggested classroom practices.

The **OECD Learning Framework 2030**



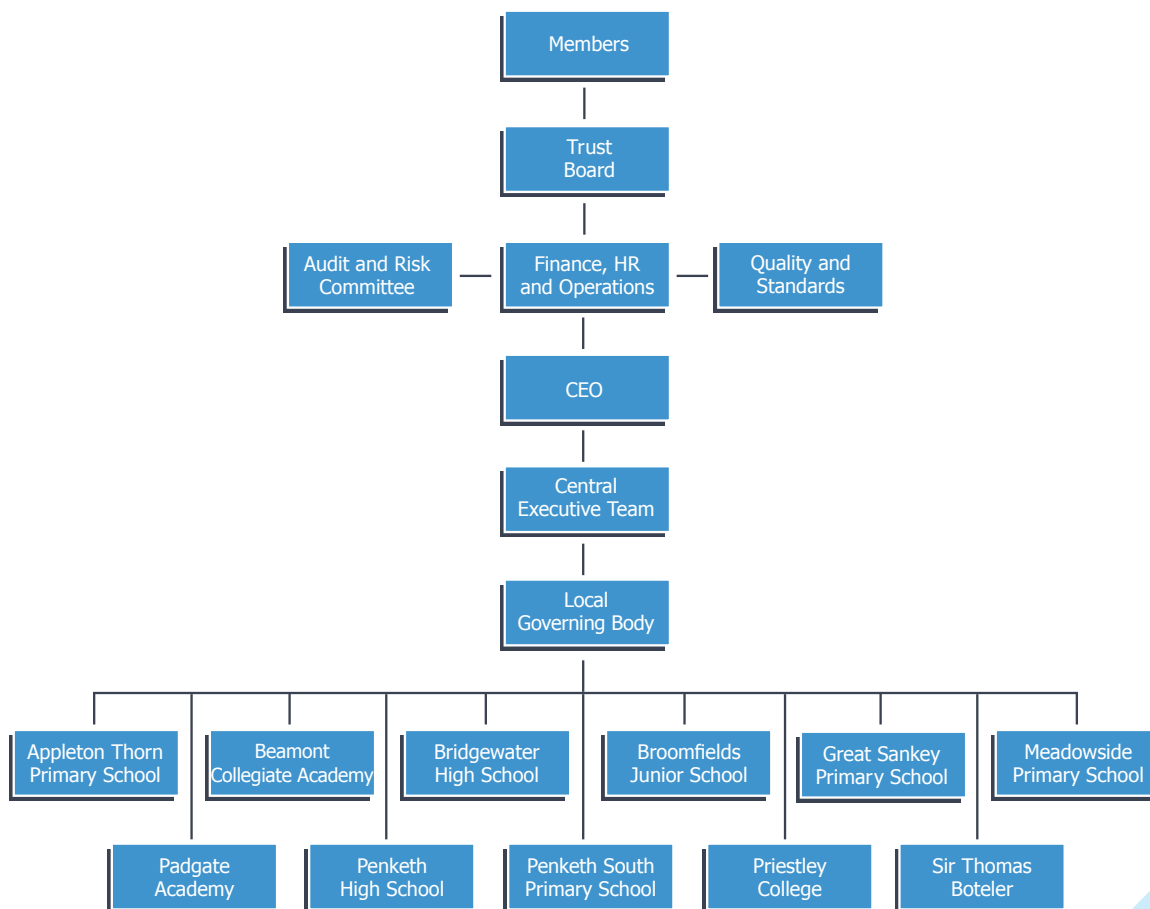
# GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

Our Trust Board ensures that TCAT complies with charity and company law requirements. The Trust Board of TCAT has two core functions and they are to set the strategic direction of the organisation and to hold leaders to account for its educational and financial performance.

As a Multi Academy Trust, the Trust Board of TCAT is responsible for all of the academies in the Trust. We do this by delegating functions to the Local Governing Body of each academy through our Scheme of Delegation.

Trustees are highly skilled and experienced, and we ensure that recruitments and appointments to the board complete the wide variety of skill-sets needed including those in education, finance and safeguarding.

Trustees participate in professional development and there are planned bespoke training sessions across the academic year to support this and further develop the skill-set.



## GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT



We are keen to sustain a steady rate of growth over the coming years to enable us to maximise the benefits of collaborative working, build capacity and expertise and to ensure we make the most impact possible on outcomes for our young people.

Our aim is develop as a medium-sized trust and the most up-to-date research suggests that the optimum number of academies needed to achieve sustainability and to maximise efficiency is between 15 and 20.

We will be focusing upon developing the primary dimension of our trust but are open

to looking at all logical opportunities in the local area, which might include sponsorship or new academies/free schools planned to address the needs of a growing economy and community.

We would not consider accepting an academy into the trust unless we have established a strong relationship beforehand and we would expect there to be a substantial period of due diligence of between 6-12 months before a school formally joins TCAT.

## EXTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS



TCAT as an outward looking trust is already involved in some exciting collaborations with a wide range of business, education and charity partners. We have formal partnership arrangements with a wide number of educational specialists as well as blue chip companies including United Utilities, the National Literacy Trust, the Education Endowment Foundation, the National College for Teaching and Leadership, Warrington Wolves, Warrington Borough Council, Hays, Warrington Youth Rowing and many more.

These partnerships share one primary objective, to enhance the experience and life chances of all our learners.

### **Oxford University partnership**

This prestigious university is working with TCAT to establish a strong presence in the north west region. This partnership is built on working with pupils, teachers, families and communities within the TCAT family. Oxford will be helping us take university learning directly into schools, bringing cutting-edge research into the classroom.

We will be working closely with Oxford University to support and encourage young people to make successful applications to competitive universities across a diverse range of subjects. We are excited by the opportunity to build a comprehensive cross phase range of activities for pupils, students and parents that will open the doors to wider engagement and greater achievement whilst at the same time enhancing professional development for teachers.

# SAFEGUARDING



The trust board and local governing bodies of TCAT are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people; they expect all staff and volunteers to share in this commitment. Our academies are a safe place for children and young people to learn and develop. Each academy has their own Designated Safeguarding Lead who coordinates the work of support systems in the schools and colleges often with external agencies to keep our children and young people safe.

In addition to this each academy delivers a taught curriculum of PSHE to provide our young people with the knowledge and skills to keep themselves safe from harm and provides them with the knowledge of where and how to seek individual support.

**Harmonised safeguarding procedures across the trust, allied with a strong professional network, ensure consistency and robustness.**

## EXTERNAL SCRUTINY



Alongside the internal procedures and arrangements for challenge and scrutiny which exist in all of our academies and across TCAT; the trust is subject to a rigorous process of external scrutiny.

In relation to academy outcomes and performance, all academies are subject to Ofsted inspections just like maintained schools and results appear in published performance tables. We also receive both an annual review and ongoing challenge from the DfE via the Regional Schools Commissioner.

In relation to financial controls, we follow the regulations set out in the Academies Financial handbook and have to undergo an annual financial audit. The ESFA provide further ongoing scrutiny and accounts have to be published publicly on an annual basis to ensure transparency.

The local authority still maintains a role in relation to areas such as safeguarding, provision for looked after children and those with SEND and we receive additional scrutiny and external challenge for strands such as GDPR, health and safety and workforce.



[www.tcat.uk.com](http://www.tcat.uk.com)

**Appleton Thorn Primary School**

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[appletonthornprimary.org.uk/warrington/primary/atp](http://appletonthornprimary.org.uk/warrington/primary/atp)

**Beamont Collegiate Academy**

01925 579500

[mail@bca.warrington.ac.uk](mailto:mail@bca.warrington.ac.uk)  
[bca.warrington.ac.uk](http://bca.warrington.ac.uk)

**Bridgewater High School**

01925 263814

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**Broomfields Junior School**

01925 265297

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**Great Sankey Primary School**

01925 728176

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**Meadowside Primary School**

01925 632705

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**Padgate Academy**

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**Penketh High School**

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**Penketh South Primary School**

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**Priestley College**

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**Sir Thomas Boteler C Of E High School**

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