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'All pupils achieve the highest standard of educational outcomes regardless of circumstance or background.'

drb Ignite Multi-Academy Trust is a vibrant and growing charitable organisation. As a unique family of nine primary schools, our vision and values are shared and consistently lived across all schools.

The drb Ignite Trust was founded in October 2014 and is an ambitious and developing Multi Academy Trust committed to driving educational improvement across its family of schools. We see ourselves as a new civic structure with a remit to advance education for public benefit. Everyone involved with the Trust is clear about the central role of strong school leadership and collaborative endeavour in achieving and sustaining this ambition for all pupils.

We are a specialist primary phase Trust operating nine schools across Birmingham and Dudley (eight community schools and one Church of England school) across the age range from nursery to year six.

Our schools are close enough to be able to share practice and resources easily, travel between each other, and collaborate around the things that matter most to local pupils and families. This capacity to work together and get to know each other's schools and communities is an important and central feature of our system design. Although we are a relatively young Academy Trust, we have plans for further growth within the West Midlands area. Currently we operate with an annual budget of £20m provided by the Department for Education through our Funding Agreement. We use this carefully, planning and prioritising spending decisions to ensure we can maintain a consistently good standard of education to over 3,000 pupils.

Our Operating Principles and Values

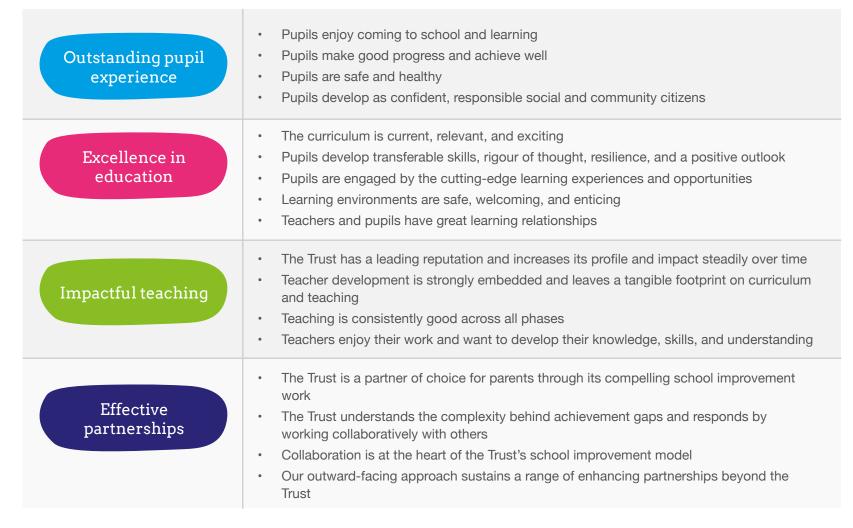
As a family of schools, we have a set of shared values which are central to our vision and approach, and

articulate how we respect pupils, work together, and develop effective partnerships beyond the Trust. The values that underpin everything we do are:

- Optimism and expectation
- Trust and integrity
- Every contribution counts
- Acts of kindness are noticed and matter
- Success is celebrated.

Our vision and values are supported by four operating principles which shape our planning and create the conditions for deep collaboration on a daily basis. helping us all to retain a strong focus on our intended outcomes:







One Trust One Organisation

To achieve great outcomes for pupils and sustain effective performance over time we keep our strategic design model simple: 'One Trust one organisation.' We strongly believe that more can be achieved by working together than individual schools can achieve by working alone. This involves building a deliberate system that is fit for purpose, robust, and flexible enough to face both immediate and future challenges.

The global pandemic has highlighted the effectiveness and efficiency that can be sustained by operating as one aligned organisation. Over this time, we have been able to provide high levels of support to our schools which has increased resilience and promoted resourcefulness and speedy decision making. For example, there has been real power in schools working together within a single governance framework with clear accountability arrangements from school level directly through to the Trust Board and vice-versa. We call this the golden thread of governance. We want our schools to respond to the diversity of their local context, taking decisions in accordance with the needs of the pupils and families they serve whilst also collaborating and sharing effectively together through a structured Scheme of Delegation with clear roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities. We believe this is the best way to

enhance levels of support, retain a focus on improvement priorities, and secure appropriate accountability.

Our workforce is fundamental to our success and growth. Attracting and retaining staff who share our vision and ambition for pupils is a number one priority for leaders and trustees. We believe the professional capacity and capability of our leadership, teaching, and support staff are central to effective teaching and learning. As one Trust, we work together to create an expectation of ongoing professional development, teacher enquiry, and evidence-based practice that sustains and improves the quality of pedagogy and learning for everyone. We are committed to developing improvement and intervention models that solve and overcome persistent problems, particularly for our most disadvantaged pupils.

Trustees and staff at all levels focus on expressing clear and consistent messages about the Trust's vision and ethos. This includes a collective responsibility for the health and wellbeing of the whole school community. Our schools use national, regional, and local information and data from our multi-agency partners like health and social care services, to understand the holistic challenges facing our pupils and families and think about ways to remove the barriers that sometimes get in



the way of effective learning and impact on health and wellbeing. We focus on research and small-scale evidence-based trials as a basis for developments.

Trust leaders and headteachers meet regularly to build a sophisticated and evidenced understanding of strengths and weaknesses across the Trust. Together, leaders make decisions about the best way to respond by reflecting on every detail of a pupil's experience. This approach enables leaders to respond rapidly when a need arises and reduces the risk of a school or group of pupils in difficulty being missed.

According to Ofsted's most recent findings:

'The Trust's vision and values are well understood by trustees, leaders, and staff alike. Trustees set the positive culture and ethos evident in both schools and the central team. A strong collegiate and collaborative approach comes through all aspects of the Trust's work, and the central team's view that "there is no Trust without trust" embodies their approach to working together with school colleagues.'

Educational Improvement

Educational improvement is the Trust's core business. We are set up to run and improve schools and this must always stand out as our purpose in all decision making. Our school improvement model reflects the centrality of great teaching that is consistent in providing highquality learning across all schools and age groups. We are driven by passion about every detail of a pupil's experience, from school entry to transition to secondary school. We see this as central to our social justice responsibilities as a Trust working predominantly in areas facing multiple disadvantages which have been increased by the impact of the pandemic.

This means a relentless focus on what happens in the classroom every day, on the front-line practice of teaching and learning and the quality of the curriculum experiences of pupils, whatever their age or developmental needs. To enable and support this we have established a central school improvement team of senior educational leaders, each with a range of bespoke specialisms and experience. In 2019, Trustees appointed an executive leader for school improvement who has full responsibility for this team and reports directly to the Trust CEO. This is having an immediate and positive impact through more effective challenge. intervention, and support based around coaching, mentoring, and personalised support programmes.

This is helping to embed expectations, achieve consistency, and develop professional knowledge, skills, and confidence.

To support the central school improvement team, we are also developing an in-house group of leading teacher improvement practitioners who not only lead practice within their own school but extend this support to other Trust schools. They are currently working across schools in the key areas of English, reading, mathematics, curriculum design, early years, religious education (RE), and curriculum enrichment.

A Trust Improvement Board structure has also been established which is a sub-committee of the Trust Board. To improve pupil achievement, for example, school leaders are now asked to report on the actions they are taking to reduce the risk of pupils being repeatedly excluded. All exclusions are reported centrally, and the reasons tracked. We recently appointed a Trust Inclusion Lead who, together with additional educational psychologist support, is seeking to understand and address reasons for exclusion.

Pastoral teams are present in all schools to support pupils and families. Each school has their own 'Children's Safeguarding Board'. Pupils work together and contribute to the Trust's wider safeguarding work, taking initiative to ensure their school environment feels safe. For example, they lead assemblies and undertake

risk assessments alongside adults. Recent projects include a focus on road safety and discouraging parents from smoking when they pick their pupils up at the end of the day. Pupils from across the Trust meet to share their work.

We are an outward facing Trust that actively seeks opportunities to work with other Academy Trusts and Teaching School Hubs to draw on best evidence and practice. We are committed to system leadership that goes beyond collaboration and engages deliberate system design and system building to improve teaching and learning. We want all our schools to bring together reflection, action, theory, and practice in the pursuit of improved outcomes.

Reporting our ESG Impact

Our commitment to constantly achieve more includes being at the forefront of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) leadership within the education sector. We are working in partnership with Sustainable Advantage, a leading ESG consultancy, to build on our successes in these areas and to embed best practice across the Trust. This will involve understanding and working to reduce our environmental footprint and tackling the pressing social and environmental issues



facing our local community. Our vision is to make operating in a sustainable and socially responsible way the new normal by fully integrating sustainability in our planning, processes, and culture within each school.

We want our pupils to gain a solid understanding of social and environmental justice, enabling them to go on to contribute to their communities through ethical citizenship and through championing sustainability leadership throughout their lives. In the pages that follow, we outline the environmental and social impacts of the school's everyday activities and communicate our sustainability performance and impact.

Our family of schools

















A Message from our Sustainability Committee Chair



Sue Egersdorff, **Executive Director of** Governance & Strategy

We live in a global society that requires our pupils to be prepared to think both critically and creatively, to solve problems, and to communicate well. The challenges of the past year have highlighted just how important relationships, resilience, and cooperation are for achieving positive outcomes for pupils, families, and communities.

Our goal at the Trust is for our teachers to be great, in both what they teach and importantly, how they teach. We share a strong moral code that enables us to be clear about our purpose. In this uncertain world it is essential that we equip our pupils with the best knowledge and skills alongside the confidence to use these to make good choices.

Although we increasingly work as one organisation, we are careful to respect the bespoke nature of our school communities and we are sensitive to the distinctive. defining features that make every one of our schools unique and special.

The Trust leadership culture is one in which accountability matters. We hold each other to account for both our individual and collective performance. We share a belief that effective oversight, monitoring, challenge, support, and responsibility are key to our success. Partnership is important at every level of the Trust and is central to creating the conditions for teachers to work together through deliberate and intentional approaches that focus relentlessly on the improvement of teaching and learning.

Furthermore, we have mapped out our overarching improvement priorities for the next three years with the Trust Strategy Plan 2021–2024. The Plan brings together input from across our stakeholder groups: teachers and teams, community groups, parents, trustees, and – most importantly – our pupils. It sets out how we will improve outcomes for pupils, families, and our staff. Supporting the Plan are three key operational plans, the Trust Roadmap 2021-22, Scheme of Delegation, and Aligned Autonomy Model. This first Sustainability Impact Report adds another tool enabling us to talk more holistically about improvement across wider aspects of the organisation. These documents together form our vision and plan for 'One Trust One Organisation' to 2024.

Over this time, we intend to grow the Trust successfully and sustainably. Our plan is for quality over quantity and for increased opportunity to invest in the people who will secure our future: the pupils and staff. One way we know we can encourage safe growth is by extending the measurement of our performance to include broader environmental, social, and governance (ESG) metrics, and by setting targets for improvement where possible. In this endeavour, we are partnering with Sustainable Advantage to guide the reporting process.

To get us started, we have used our *Trust Strategy Plan* to map out a three-year agenda for reporting on our ESG performance. In our first year of reporting, we aim to identify our areas of priority, as well as gaps in our data and plans for improving our data collection. Next year, we will present our baseline data and strategic targets for improving our performance. In year three, we will measure our progress against our targets and consider the next stage of our ESG improvement plan.

I hope you enjoy reading our first ESG Sustainability Impact Report.





'We work together to achieve outstanding pupil experience, excellence in education, impactful teaching, and effective partnerships.'

Our Trust vision is to support pupils to achieve the highest standard of educational outcomes, regardless of circumstance or background. In addition to delivering effective teaching and learning opportunities, we believe that developing ambitious, ethical citizens and leaders of the future requires embedding knowledge about environmental and social sustainability from the earliest age. This perspective informs all aspects of our work from our core business of teaching, learning, and curriculum design to financial planning, contracting, and managing our capital assets. It is increasingly threaded through everything we do and an important consideration in our plans to grow and extend our reach.

Targets and Performance Outcomes

We have set out our strategic sustainability objectives and targets in seven broad areas which align to our Strategy Plan. These are detailed in our Strategy Plan Performance Framework and include:

- Quality of education
- Leadership ethos, culture, and strategy
- People strategy
- Governance and accountability
- System leadership and partnerships
- Finance, compliance, and asset management
- Growth and sustainability



Promoting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a collection of 17 interlinked global goals designed to be a blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all.

The SDGs were set up in 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly and are intended to be achieved by the year 2030. They address the global challenges we all face, including poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, health, education, peace, and justice.

The Trust believes they provide a comprehensive framework for mapping and capturing the work we do across these areas. As part of the Trust's advocacy of sustainability, we will use the Framework as a starting point to:

- Engage pupils, leaders, staff, parents, and trustees in raising awareness
- Develop our Sustainability Champions to support them to work within and beyond their own schools to build effective partnerships with other settings and Trusts

- Encourage pupils to lead SDG projects and for these projects to be both local and global
- Support the Trust culture and values, demonstrating our commitment to a broad and balanced curriculum
- Deepen and develop subject engagement with global issues including cross-curricular and interdisciplinary collaboration
- Stimulate meaningful conversations at every level about the Trust's contribution to sustainable futures.
- Think about more complex and/or controversial local or national issues, and
- Make new and dynamic partnerships with external partners

As a charity with civic responsibilities the *Sustainable* Development Goals are helping us to shape our thinking around respectful growth and sustainability.

We have initially selected six SDGs that align with our immediate improvement priorities and will help to keep our ESG work on track. These are integrated throughout our impact report, demonstrating our contribution in 2020/21.

We aspire to use our position in society to be a wider force for good, helping to create better outcomes for all pupils and supporting them to be responsible custodians of the planet that they will inherit.

You can read more about the initiatives listed in the following pages in the relevant sections of this report.









































UN Sustainable Development Goal

UN Indicators





End poverty in all its forms everywhere



1.2 By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and pupils of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions.

1.3 Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable.

Providing our pupils with stable pupilhoods, we aim to give them the best chance in life to be able to support themselves.



Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all, at all ages

3.5 Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol.

Ensuring all our pupils and staff live and work in safe and healthy environments, we work against specific challenges, safeguarding pupils from all forms of abuse.





Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all



4.1 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes.

Monitoring school attendance closely over the pandemic and supporting parents to prioritise regular attendance as far as possible.

Developing a high quality and accessible remote education offer for pupils unable to come to school.

Developing a curriculum offer that is broad, structured, and coherent, supported by effective curricular leadership and delivered through high quality teaching in all schools.

All schools engaging with the UN Rights Respecting Schools Programme, empowering teachers to engage pupils in important contemporary issues. In Rights Respecting Schools adults and pupils together learn about and promote pupils's universal rights.

UN Sustainable Development Goal

UN Indicators





inequality within and among countries

10.2 By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic, and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex. disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status.

Championing diversity, equality, and inclusion across our teaching, learning, and recruitment processes and systems.

Taking part in a programme of national and international initiatives aimed at reducing prejudice and intolerance.

Running campaigns, holding assemblies, and participating in events that promote inclusivity and celebrate difference, and covering a range of diversity-related content in the curriculum.

Building active Pupils's Safeguarding Boards and School Councils for pupils to raise and discuss the everyday issues that affect them.

Maintaining recruitment processes that encourage diversity and attract the best talent from across a range of backgrounds.



Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

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12.5 By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling, and reuse.

and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting

12.6 Encourage companies, especially large and

transnational companies, to adopt sustainable practices

Monitoring our consumption of energy, waste, and water and establishing set targets to reduce it.

Retrofitting and refurbishing our school buildings for energy efficiency.

Contracting with catering and cleaning suppliers who offer sustainability credentials.

Working towards a Gold Food for Life standard across the Trust.

Engaging with our supply chain to minimise our upstream impacts.



Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

15.a Mobilize and significantly increase financial resources from all sources to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity and ecosystems.

Improving our outdoor learning environments and forest school spaces.

Developing wildlife ponds and working with our catering provider to plant gardens and orchards to grow a portion of our own food.

Teaching pupils about the importance of organic, local, and nutritious food and biodiversity.

Creating an ongoing tree planting programme.

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Our Strategic Ambition

Our Strategy Plan 2021-24 and associated Performance Framework present our planning priorities in detail. These can be summarised as follows:

- ✓ Build the internal capacity and capability of our workforce to achieve improvement in school performance and pupil outcomes. This will include clear priorities for workforce structures, recruitment, retention, development, and talent management. The organisational staffing structure will be benchmarked against comparable Trusts. It will also be costed for affordability and include financial projections to 2024 to demonstrate sustainability, value for money, and intended impact.
- ✓ Respect our people. During the COVID-19 pandemic school leaders and staff have given more of themselves than ever before. Our school communities have responded with recognition, appreciation, and warmth. This has further demonstrated to trustees that we must continue to keep pupils, families, and staff at the heart of all we do as we move forwards, refocusing our educational offer and ensuring pupils receive the rich and diverse curriculum they both need and deserve.
- ✓ Grow our Trust. The total pupil number across all Trust schools currently stands at 3,068. Forward

projections suggest that this figure will drop over the next three years due to a fall in the birth rate across both Birmingham and Dudley. The Trust has already met with the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) to discuss the ambition of the Trust to increase its size to include more primary schools through careful and structured growth. This ambition was well received and over 2021-22 the Trust will continue to work closely with the RSC to pursue opportunities for growth in line with the Strategic Plan, vision, and operating values.

✓ Sustain effective and efficient systems and practices that bring our values to life and maintain a focus on the Trust's vision for pupils, commitment to local communities, and charitable objectives.

To achieve this bold ambition, we are working hard in the following areas:

Great Teaching and Learning

We believe that consistently strong teaching in every classroom will steadily improve outcomes for all our pupils. Our principles for great teaching are driven by evidence-based research. Great teachers develop a broad array of teaching strategies that are holistic and pupil centred. These strategies, combined with subject knowledge and knowledge of individual pupils, positively impact on learning.

Underpinning this is the Trust's curriculum, where content is well sequenced and provides a progressive framework for learning. This extends from early years foundation stage (EYFS), through Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, preparing pupils for the next stage in their learning journey. We believe that a robust curriculum with a clear rationale, combined with great teaching, facilitates pupil progress and attainment. Leaders and teachers are encouraged to develop a high level of pedagogical awareness, a deep understanding of pupil development, and identification of effective intervention and assessment practices.

Our Curriculum:

- · Is led, implemented, and accessed by leaders, teachers, support staff, and pupils who have a secure knowledge and understanding of the curriculum design and its structure
- Is language rich and enables the successful development of communication skills and understanding of vocabulary
- Meets the aims, purpose and objectives outlined in the National Curriculum for each subject discipline
- · Is supported by a full programme of professional development, linked to clear expectations and aims. This underpins the implementation of the agreed curriculum

- Content is inclusive and representative of our schools and wider communities
- Supports the development of shared pedagogy for key aspects of the curriculum

The design of our curriculum includes:

- Purpose, key principles, and values, agreed expectations, underpinning concepts, clearly defined content, and an established logical sequence. These are regularly reviewed through a robust approach to monitoring and evaluation that ensures impact against intended outcomes
- A coherent and consistent rationale that underpins the whole curriculum and is in place across all schools
- A consistent assessment framework for each subject discipline which is used to evaluate the impact of the planned curriculum and inform further provision
- Well-developed and planned cross-curricular opportunities that are used for revisiting and embedding learning (interleaving/cross contextualisation)

 Individual subject discipline progression routes that outline the skills and knowledge pupils should secure at each stage of their development

To constantly develop their practice, our teachers draw on a range of strategies to enhance and deliver content in the most effective way. Pedagogical approaches in each of our schools are designed to develop professional expertise that reflects:

- A secure knowledge of how pupils learn and retain knowledge and skills including cognitive and metacognitive strategies, motivational and emotional dispositions, learning processes, stages of pupil development and responsive teaching methodologies
- An understanding of instructional processes including teaching methods, lesson structures and classroom management techniques
- The precise use of assessment strategies, both diagnostic and evaluative



Sustainability Awareness through our Curriculum

We see the classroom as a place to develop knowledge in young minds about social and environmental responsibility. Our schools teach about specific aspects of sustainability in the science and geography curriculum such as:

- Living things and their habitats, including factors that pose a danger and recognising that environments can change; life cycles of plants; food chains etc.
- Local area studies including traffic surveys, land use, and how humans affect the environment
- Distribution of natural resources including energy, food, and water
- Some schools teach through contextual topics, for example the rainforest, which also combines opportunities to write about these subjects at length

In addition, diversity and equality are important topics within a sustainability-orientated education. Our schools teach this primarily through the English curriculum, selecting books which include diverse characters from different backgrounds. Pupils also learn about topics including ethnicity and religious diversity, gender and sexual orientation, austerity, and homelessness.

Our revised Relationships Policy implemented from September 2020 across all schools recognises

that strong relationships with adults and peers can dramatically enhance pupils's levels of motivation and promote learning. We believe that pupils who have access to caring relationships are more academically engaged, have stronger social skills, and exhibit better behaviour.

Sustainability Awards and Accreditations

Beyond our curriculum content, individual schools are involved in extracurricular programmes to raise awareness about environmental and social sustainability. Many of these programmes have been recognised with external awards and accreditations.

UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Programme

Over the reporting year, all Trust schools have engaged with the UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools programme. Guided by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Pupil (UNCRC), this programme supports teachers and pupils to work together to learn about and promote pupils's rights in the context of contemporary issues, from the refugee crisis to climate change to the global impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Schools work towards accreditation in the form of the Rights Respecting Schools Award (RRSA) at bronze. silver, or gold level. The journey to the highest level can take up to four years. In our first year of participating Trust-wide, all schools received or maintained at least a Bronze: Rights Committed Award.



This means all schools have evidenced that senior leadership understands and is committed to achieving the aims of the award, and that they have introduced the three teaching and learning RRSA strands:

- School knowledge and understanding of pupils's rights
- Ethos and relationships
- · Empowerment of pupils and young people

We are very proud of The Oval School, who have received the Gold: Rights Respecting Award. This means that UNICEF UK has assessed that the school has proactively embedded pupils's rights throughout the school in all its policies, practice, and ethos.





Reading for Pleasure Project

All schools in the Trust have been involved with the Open University's Reading for Pleasure Project and associated teacher professional development programme. This involves all schools setting clear targets and defining success criteria for the improvement of reading and engagement of pupils in literary activity across the whole school. We believe that this has not only improved reading across the Trust but has also been impactful in increasing pupils's confidence, selfawareness, resourcefulness, and resilience leading to better behaviour and motivation to learn.

eden project

Eden Project Award

Four of our schools: Jervoise, The Oval Primary, Princethorpe Junior, and Wychall Primary, have taken part in the Eden Project Award, a series of curriculumbased full day programmes working with pupils both in and outside of the classroom to help them connect with the environment in sustainable ways. This included supporting teachers to understand the vital importance of bringing regenerative change for sustainability to their school community. Going forwards, we are keen to explore how we might align our Trust mission more closely with Eden's core principles of regeneration, transformation, connection, and commonality.



Planet Mark Certification

Launched in 2013. Planet Mark is a sustainability certification that verifies and measures carbon and social data to reduce emissions and help organisations to achieve the UN SDGs. Four of our schools all achieved Planet Mark certification as part of the Eden Project Award. To gain the certification, they carefully monitored their carbon footprint and reduced their upstream impacts by engaging a full range of stakeholders to play an active part in reducing carbon emissions. This has included offsetting emissions by supporting a Cool Earth Project to help the South American Asháninka people protect their rainforest from dangerous logging programmes.



Eco-Schools Green Flag Award

Closely connected with the principles of the Eden Project is the Eco Schools Green Flag Award. This is designed to recognise, reward, and celebrate the environmental achievements of pupils and young people. Hob Green Primary School has been active in evaluating itself against the Eco-Schools seven-step framework. This requires the establishment of a pupil led Eco-Committee who take responsibility for evaluating school approaches against a set of criteria which include such things as conducting an environmental review and creating an action plan for improvements, making curriculum links, and devising strategies for involving the wider school community.



Junior Award Scheme for Schools

The Junior Award Scheme for Schools (JASS) is an accredited award scheme that helps pupils to develop interpersonal skills and self-confidence that will support their successful transition from primary to secondary school. It is an inclusive award and provides a structure for the start of vocational learning. Year 5 and 6 pupils at The Oval School have participated in JASS, by completing a community environmental project, over 18 hours and across 2 school terms. Following disruption over the worst period of the pandemic, the school intends to resume the JASS programme from September 2021 with a pilot after-school club of Y5 pupils, with participants feeding back to the rest of the school through assemblies and other sessions.



Junior Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) training

Beechwood CE Primary School and The Bromley Pensnett Primary School took part in the Junior Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) training programme provided through West Midlands Police. Pupils focused on understanding the impact of littering and fly-tipping on local communities and engaged in safely collecting and disposing of litter in the neighbourhood around their schools.

Across the Trust, schools engaged in Walk to School Focus Week and Living Streets EYFS Little Feet campaigns aimed at reducing traffic congestion around schools and encouraging walking, scooting, or cycling to school with a particular focus on reducing car use for very short journeys.

Pupil Health and Wellbeing

As a Trust working in areas of significant disadvantage, our improvement strategy looks specifically at pupils's holistic needs. This includes collating and analysing data that goes beyond educational progress and attainment to include data and information from multi agency partners. We make valuable use of the *Public* Health England Pupil Health Profiles on the Fingertip data website. The themes we have considered over the period of this report include:

- Immunisation levels
- Babies born with low birthweight
- Pupil poverty and homelessness
- Road traffic accidents, injuries, and A&E attendance
- School readiness
- Pupilhood obesity

In the Dudley area, obesity is significantly higher than the national average for both 4-5-year-olds and 10-11-year-olds. Immunisation for common pupilhood diseases is equal to or better than the national average. The rate of young people being admitted to hospital because of self-harm or mental health conditions is lower than average and is decreasing, contrary to the national trend. A lower-than-average proportion of pupils are at or above the expected level of development for communication skills and for personal-social skills at the end of Reception.

In the Birmingham area, both infant mortality and pupil mortality are significantly higher than the national average. Obesity is higher than the national average for 10-11-year-olds. MMR vaccination is below average, as is the proportion of pupils at or above the expected level of development for communication skills and for personal-social skills at the end of Reception. First time entrants to the youth justice system are higher than the national average. The rate of young people being admitted to hospital because of self-harm or mental health conditions is lower than average. The rate of young people being admitted to hospital because of alcohol-specific conditions or substance abuse is lower than average.

This data provides an annual snapshot report of pupil health in local authority areas and brings together indicators for local government and clinical commissioning group (CCG) areas across several different themes. The Trust uses the profiles to:

- Understand the health challenges and needs of our local communities
- Improve the health and wellbeing of our pupils
- · Support the reduction of pupils's health and wellbeing inequalities



Effective Governance

As a multi academy trust we adhere to a set of policies and procedures that ensure compliance with the Academy Trust Handbook 2021 and the requirements of our DfE Funding Agreement. Trustees are aware of their responsibility for the three core functions of effective trust governance:

- 1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos, and strategic direction
- 2. Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils including the performance management of staff.
- 3. Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent.

Trustees also passionately understand the link between a great workplace culture and improved educational outcomes for pupils. They are committed to ensuring pupils and staff have access to safe and welcoming environments and that they are treated fairly and given the opportunity to thrive.

We are in the process of reviewing our policies and procedures to better reflect the ethos of collaboration we are working to embed across the organisation.

Due to the extensive strategic and operational planning currently being carried out by the Trust, of which this report is a part, we have made governance an area of particular focus for this year by conducting a thorough internal review of Trustee knowledge, skills, and expertise.

Our Trust Executive Leadership Team carries out the operational management functions of the Trust, developing and maintaining effective relationships with all Trustees and ensuring the Board receives quality information in the level of detail required to make informed decisions and fulfil its functions and legal obligations.

The Trust Executive Leadership Team is made up of the CEO, Executive Directors of School Improvement and Governance, the Chief Financial Officer, Director of Estates, Director of Operations, Director of Curriculum & Professional Development, and Director of Privacy & Data Protection. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) also acts as the Accounting Officer in line with requirements in the Academy Trust Handbook 2021.



Committees

In addition to the Trust Improvement Board mentioned earlier, the Trust Board has established six sub-committees with the purpose of providing advice and support, overseeing, and informing the overall work of the Board. Additional committees to advise on Sustainability and Health and Wellbeing are currently being set up.

Achievement, Support, and Scrutiny **Committee**

The Achievement, Support, and Scrutiny Committee has a critical remit to support the Board in its responsibilities to provide high standards of educational achievement and wellbeing for all pupils. The Committee works closely with the Trust Improvement Board to oversee the Trust's safeguarding, educational and curriculum standards, performance, and approach across all schools.

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee meets at least four times a year. It works closely alongside the Audit and Risk Committee. The Board has established the Committee to support it in the

discharge of its responsibilities for issues of financial probity, budget planning, management, and monitoring.

Audit and Risk Committee

The Audit and Risk Committee ensures the highest standards of stewardship and propriety in the use of public funds. The Committee works closely with the Finance Committee to support the Board to meet its responsibilities for issues of risk management, internal controls, value for money framework and financial oversight. The Committee meets at least four times a year, once in each of the three academic terms and once per year to receive the annual Report and Accounts from the External Auditors alongside the Finance Committee.

Sustainability Committee

We are forming a Sustainability Committee, which will lead on implementing changes to meet our ESG targets. Initially, Trust leaders are working with Sustainable Advantage to produce this first Sustainability Report and to develop ongoing plans for data gathering, target setting, and progress monitoring to be set out in each year's report. The

Committee will meet twice a year to review progress and agree necessary actions to achieve our ESG targets.

Health and Wellbeing Forum

In line with the Trust's Strategy Plan 2021-24, we are establishing a cross-Trust Health and Wellbeing Forum which will meet regularly to promote both staff and pupil wellbeing. This will include support for mental and physical health and encourage staff to raise, discuss, and find solutions to concerns and issues. The Forum membership will include a mixture of staff, senior leaders, and Trustees and will be chaired initially by the Executive Director of Governance and Strategy. The Forum will build on existing work using the Public Health England annual Local Authority Pupil Health Profiles.

The Forum will also take responsibility for monitoring and reporting to Trustees on the Trust Staff Wellbeing Strategy outlined in the following section. To help shape thinking about the purpose and function of the Forum, staff in our Birmingham schools have been involved in the Birmingham Education Partnership's

NewStart approach. This is an expert-led approach to whole school improvement for resilience. Funded through the NHS, this asset-building programme seeks to build strength and confidence in school systems to support pupils who are vulnerable to poor educational and wellbeing outcomes. We intend to incorporate many of the programme's approaches into our Forum.

Remuneration and Nomination **Committee**

The Remuneration and Nomination Committee support Trustees in their responsibilities for ensuring the highest standards of corporate governance in the remuneration and succession planning of senior leaders and staff. Meetings are held at least annually or more frequently as required.

Disciplinary and Appeals Committee

The Board delegates responsibility for considering cases which may possibly lead to dismissal through the Disciplinary and Appeals Committee. This ensures that all Trust staff who may be subject to disciplinary action are dealt with in a fair and equitable manner.

Parent and Community Advisory **Forum**

A central component of the Trust's governance model are the Parent and Community Advisory Forums. Every school has an active Forum where regular sessions are held every term to listen to the views and opinions of parents, carers, and the local communities around our schools. The Forums illustrate further our golden thread of governance which links Trustees with pupils and parents in ways that are meaningful and allow for everyone to be included and heard in the decisions that affect them. Over the reporting year there has been a dominance of discussion around COVID-19 issues, although space has been found to discuss new school logos, websites, and uniform.

Review of Policies and Procedures to Support Sustainability

The Trust has an extensive set of education, finance, GDPR, health and safety, human resources, and safeguarding policies that are publicly available on our website or on request. We have included below summaries of a selection of policies that link specifically to sustainability. The Trust Board has responsibility for reviewing these to ensure they remain relevant, up to date, and compliant.

Accessibility Plan

The Trust is committed to ensuring that all pupils have equality of opportunity to access a safe, secure learning environment and a successful education. We are committed to challenging stigmatising attitudes about disability and the Accessibility Plan sets out five Trust priorities:

- To increase the extent to which pupils with disabilities can participate equally across all aspects of the curriculum
- To improve the physical environment, both internal and external, of Trust schools to increase the extent to which pupils with disabilities can take advantage of the full range of educational and associated opportunities and experiences
- To improve the provision of information available to pupils with disabilities and parents/carers in ways that are fully accessible to them and meet their needs
- To work more effectively in partnership with parents to remove barriers to learning for pupils with disabilities
- To identify any additional support needs for pupils with disabilities resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic

The Accessibility Plan is reviewed by the Trust Board every three years. The current version covers the period from July 2021 to July 2024. The Audit and Risk Committee are responsible for oversight of the Plan and senior leaders and the Director of Estates are accountable for ongoing monitoring and review.





Aligned Autonomy Model

The Trust defines aligned autonomy as:

'Creating a balanced culture that gives schools the freedom to determine how best to meet the learning needs of their pupils within an established collaborative framework that prioritises the concept of One Trust One Organisation and the improvement outcomes for all.'

Our Aligned Autonomy Model sets out our thinking about how we will develop and maintain an agile and flexible organisation, avoid overly hierarchical structures, and remain fit for purpose. This demonstrates our commitment to building a strong, united culture within our organisation underpinned by effective and efficient processes and systems from which all staff and pupils benefit.

Safeguarding and Pupil Protection Policy and **Procedures**

The Trust and its schools are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all pupils. Each Trust school takes a contextualised approach to understanding and responding to pupils's experiences. The Safeguarding and Pupil Protection Policy and

Procedures set out the Trust's seven guiding principles of safeguarding and how the Trust embeds a culture of safeguarding across all our schools through shared expectations and robust procedures. All safeguarding practices are reviewed annually in line with DfE statutory guidance, Keeping Pupils Safe in Education. The next review is scheduled for September 2021.

Anti-Bullying Policy

The Trust is committed to providing a warm, caring, and safe environment for all pupils so that they can learn and play in a relaxed and secure environment alongside their peers. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Our *Anti-Bullying Policy* demonstrates how every concern will be taken seriously and dealt with promptly following a clear step-by-step procedure.

Data Protection Policy and GDPR

All personal data collected about staff, pupils, parents, trustees, visitors, and other individuals is collected. stored, and processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). We take our responsibilities under GDPR exceptionally seriously and all staff are regularly briefed about Trust expectations for the management of personal data and privacy. The Trust also has a common Data Breach Response Procedure which is followed by all schools.

Equality and Diversity Policy

We are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all pupils, staff, parents, and carers, irrespective of race, gender, disability, belief, sexual orientation, age, or socio-economic background. All staff appointments and promotions are made based on merit and ability and are in full compliance with HR law. All admission arrangements are made in accordance with this Policy. The Policy was fully reviewed in 2020 and a Trust Equality Statement added. The next review will take place in 2022.

Staff Wellbeing Strategy

The Trust believes that its staff are its most valuable asset. The Staff Wellbeing Strategy outlines the importance the Trust places on staff health and wellbeing. This has been a significant area of attention over the period of the pandemic with regular staff checkins and surveys arranged to monitor overall wellbeing. The Trust also commissions external expert support for staff wellbeing and mental health which is available to all staff and includes a confidential helpline. The Employee Assist Programme has been well received by staff and impact will be formally assessed in 2022. We have ensured that the scope of the Wellbeing Strategy is extensive and includes consideration of work-related stress, workload pressures, staff supervision, and coaching and mentoring support.

Trans Equality Policy

The Trust and its schools are committed to maintaining equality for all staff and recognise that trans employees may experience complex challenges in the workplace, especially where there is a lack of understanding about what it means to be trans. Over the reporting period, the Trust has developed a Trans Equality Policy. This provides guidance to create a supportive environment, which challenges stigma, protects the rights of trans employees, and ensures no individual is subject to discrimination. Throughout the application of the Policy the Trust and its schools will comply with all relevant employment legislation.

Meaningful Relationships

We are increasingly interested in social sustainability. This is a key pillar of the UN's Global Compact, and a call for organisations to align their strategies and operations with universal principles of human rights, decent labour, and gender equality¹. The Trust sees itself as a relational organisation that places pupils's needs at the heart of everything it does. Therefore, pupils, families, and staff are our driving priority.

We are based in areas where members of our community sometimes face disadvantage and discrimination, and while our primary focus is to educate the pupils who attend our schools, we also play an important role in supporting families, engaging the



wider community, and working effectively alongside our multi agency partners e.g. health and social care services. This has been evident throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, when it has been necessary to increase our support to parents, signpost them to a range of other services and find new ways to work with external services to ensure our pupils receive the help they need and deserve. This has included extending the reach of our support and help to other Trusts in the region, particularly with their response to developing and implementing COVID-19 safe practices.

We embed many elements of social justice and diversity, equality, and inclusion into our teaching and learning as we believe this helps pupils to become self-aware, resilient, and able to demonstrate empathy as active and contributing young citizens. As we increasingly measure and report on our activity in these areas, we will promote greater collaboration across and between trusts, and extend our reach and impact into the communities around our schools.

¹United Nations, United Nations Global Compact [website] https://www.unglobalcompact.org/what-is-gc (accessed 20 September 2021)

Pupil, Staff, and Parent Voice

At the centre of our relational approach is listening to all stakeholders. This involves promoting the value of pupil, staff, and parent voice and actively encouraging participation and engagement. To achieve this over the reporting period when face to face contact has been difficult, we have conducted a series of surveys. We received 655 responses to our most recent parental survey, conducted in March 2021 across all Trust schools. The survey found that:

- 85% of respondents reported their pupil was excited to return to school after lockdown closures
- 91% of respondents believe their school is effective in supporting their pupil's wellbeing
- 88% felt positive towards their pupil's education
- 91% of respondents felt confident the Trust was taking all reasonable measures to keep pupils and families safe at school
- 88% of respondents could see how their school's response to the pandemic supported their pupil's learning



The earlier staff survey conducted in October 2020 presented a similar and complimentary picture with over 90% of the 171 responses agreeing that the Trust was taking all reasonable steps to keep every member of the school community safe and well.

Following is a selection of responses from parents:

'All staff and teachers have gone above and beyond in supporting the parents and pupils and have ensured all safety measures are followed.'

'The school did a good job in keeping me well informed of the situation.'

'My school is being very helpful and is supporting our wellbeing very well.'

'I think the school has been very good with the way they have helped and supported during these very hard times.'

'Staff have been amazing; they always keep us in the know.'

'Pupil welfare contact from teachers was amazing.'

'We felt the school are supportive not only with pupils but family too.'



Fit for Purpose Assets and Environment

The Trust is responsible for maintaining and improving its capital assets to ensure all pupils have access to safe and well-tended learning spaces. To achieve this aim, we have undertaken energy saving retrofits and refurbishments across our schools. Many of our schools have implemented bespoke localised plans aimed at reducing energy and paper use and increasing recycling. Four of our schools have achieved external environmental accreditation for sustainability initiatives and we are scaling up our accreditation and awards achievement programme across all schools.

At a Trust-wide level, cleaning and catering contracts are being awarded to environmentally conscious suppliers, and we are increasingly using available green space to encourage positive emotional, developmental, and achievement benefits for pupils and staff.

In this first reporting year, many of our environmental metrics, including energy, water, waste, and transport, have been heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, we see this first report as an opportunity to implement reporting processes across the Trust. In next year's report, we anticipate a more robust and reflective dataset which will act as a benchmark for setting targets to improve our environmental performance.

In line with the UK's commitment to become net zero by 2050, and to safeguard the planet for future generations, we recognise that we must all take urgent action to reduce our emissions and our wider environmental impacts. As a civic organisation we see it as our responsibility to model best practice in this area and to lead the way locally. Our schools' daily operations have a range of environmental impacts that we are working to manage and create enhanced awareness about, alongside positive environmental change.



Energy

Table 12

	kWh	tCO ₂ e
Electricity	934,971	198.5
Gas	3,572,479	654.3
Total	_	852.8 ³



²Based on a mix of actual and estimated data.

³Tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂e) is a standard unit for calculating emissions across carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases (GHGs). Tonnes per kWh change annually based on government guidance.

Review of the Year

During the 2019-20 financial year, the Trust undertook a full utility tendering exercise for energy. The new contract was phased in over the financial year as each school's incumbent contract ended. All schools are now on a new gas and electricity contract, provided by British Gas. This change will enable us to better measure our energy consumption and increase the amount of energy we procure from renewable sources.

Over the past two years, we have implemented extensive energy efficiency modifications to our buildings. These include:

- Four schools have replaced their existing lighting with light emitting diode (LED) energy saving lighting, reducing costs and energy used for lighting by 67%
- Single glazed windows in two of our schools have been replaced with double glazed alternatives
- Roofs on six schools have been replaced to improve insulation and save on energy used for heating
- The heating plant has been replaced at one school with heating mains repairs at two more
- Two schools, Princethorpe Infant and Princethorpe Junior, have solar panels that produce energy on-site

Planning for Next Year

During the reporting period, our energy use was impacted by the pandemic as schools were partly closed during periods of national lockdown with only particular cohorts of pupils attending. As a result, energy consumption during this period, presented in Table 1, does not reflect our normal consumption patterns. Consequently, we have decided not to set energy reduction targets this year until we have more accurate baseline data.

Having one energy supplier across the Trust will enable us to gather a complete and robust dataset over the coming year to present in next year's sustainability report. Next year's consumption will act as a benchmark for our future energy and carbon emission reduction targets.

We intend to continue undertaking building retrofits and refurbishments where appropriate to conserve energy. This includes planning that is currently underway to replace windows at Wychall Primary School in the Key Stage 1 and kitchen areas. Over the coming year, the Trust are identifying opportunities to further develop the EYFS outdoor provision for all of our schools, with a goal to enhancing our pupils' learning environment supporting their development of self-confidence, resilience and independence, while helping them to keep physically and mentally healthy.

Waste

Table 24

	Kg	%
Waste to landfill	85,990	86%
Recycling	14,280	14%
Total	100,270	100%



Review of the Year

Our waste data in 2020-2021 was impacted by periods of pandemic lockdown when school attendance was seriously restricted. The waste produced during this period, presented in Table 2, is therefore not reflective of our normal consumption patterns. We currently have multiple waste collection suppliers across different schools, which we intend to consolidate. This will enable us to be more accurate with tracking our waste production and treatment (i.e. how much of our waste is recycled and how much is sent to landfill) using an average weight per collection type and frequency, and a typical breakdown of disposal method.

As existing waste management contracts expire, we have been moving all our hygiene waste collection to phs Group. Having one collection supplier will enable more precise measurement of waste produced and final treatment. Additionally, we are procuring washroom matting made from recycled fishing nets from phs Group. Nylon fishing nets that end up in marine ecosystems pose a growing threat of choking and ensnaring marine life and take hundreds of years to decompose. Specialist washroom matting removes some of this material from oceans, upcycling it to give it longer use.

Planning for Next Year

In 2019, The Oval School was in initial talks with Birmingham City Council to reduce waste and increase recycling throughout the school. While the COVID-19 pandemic prevented these plans from progressing, we intend to resume the conversation in the 2021-22 school year. Similarly, other schools had bins throughout their buildings to separate recycling, with posters to remind pupils and staff to recycle. However, COVID-19 restrictions interrupted these efforts due to staff shortages and social distancing measures. We will resume these efforts in the coming year.

As with energy, we will aim to collate more accurate data about our waste over the coming year, to provide a benchmark for future waste reduction targets. We also plan to increase our recycling, and reduce the amount of paper being used, especially through photocopying. We aim to achieve this through staff engagement and communication, led by our schools-based Sustainability Champions.

⁴Based on a mix of actual and estimated data

Water Use and Conservation



Review of the Year

Water constitutes up to 65% of the human body and 90% of the structure of plants. Yet this fundamental resource, necessary to the existence of all life on earth, is seriously threatened. As we experience increasingly hot and dry summers, we need to safeguard this key resource for future generations. We are aware that we need to manage our water use whilst maintaining the biodiversity of our school grounds and the quality of our forest school areas and playing fields.

We use water in many of our everyday operations from grounds irrigation, washrooms and kitchens to catering, play areas and cleaning. We recognise that schools that are equipped with water conservation devices may use less than half the amount of water used in other schools. Our plan is to do more work in this area over the coming year, starting with a target to measure water consumption across all Trust assets more accurately.

In the past year, we have replaced washroom urinals with more efficient FLOWSAVER urinals which use up to 80% less water than standard traditional products while maintaining hygiene through automated flushing.

Planning for Next Year

Over the next year, we will improve our water data collection within our own operations and identify opportunities to have further measurable impact in this area. Further, we commit to designing, operating, and maintaining our existing and new facilities where possible to ensure water efficiency across our estate.

We will monitor and eliminate water waste through identifying leaks, improving efficiency of equipment, and evaluating processes for recovering rainwater and runoff. We will undertake a study to benchmark our venues by their average daily usage and use this data validation to highlight high usage sites. Where usage increases or is marked as high, the setting will be surveyed by the Director of Estates to identify improvement priorities e.g. efficiency initiatives and leak fixes.



Biodiversity

Review of the Year

Research has shown that spending time in nature supports good mental health, improves pupils's cognitive development and immune function, encourages exercise, and strengthens connection and friendships. The research suggests that contact with external green open spaces during school time is significantly associated with better performance in structured tasks requiring direct attention, problem solving and positive social behaviours.

Across the Trust, we have outdoor space covering approximately 4,500 m². This includes outdoor play areas, gardens, forest school areas, and grassed playing fields of varying sizes. All Trust schools have a bespoke outdoor learning environment in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework requirements. We see green space and biodiversity as impacting positively on pupils's learning and wellbeing, and as such we aim to maintain and enhance the ecological and educational value of our sites, thus having a positive impact on local and global biodiversity.

Planning for Next Year

Over the next year, we will improve our water data One of our outdoor learning spaces at Audley, which is approximately 200m², is currently not in use due to defective climbing equipment. Rather than restoring the current equipment, we have secured 420 trees from the Woodland Trust, which we will use to create

an orchard with learning tables. Trees include working wood and wildlife saplings, wild harvest saplings, and natural hedgerows, all of which will attract a rich variety of wildlife

We are currently fundraising to develop a Seed to Feed initiative, in partnership with our catering provider. This involves the removal of tarmac and carpet grass areas and replacement with topsoil, turf, and vegetable beds which the pupils can use to learn about growing food. Mulching around the beds will enable easy access, including wheelchair access. The salads, root vegetables, and herbs produced will be utilised in school kitchens. The initiative is driven by three primary objectives:

- 1. To give our pupils a greater awareness of where their food comes from.
- 2. To encourage them to try the produce they have grown and so promote a healthier diet, and
- 3. To embed the initiative into the broader curriculum promoting wellbeing and giving the pupils a sense of responsibility through caring and maintaining the vegetable patches and beds.

In addition, we are evaluating options for future optimisation of all green areas including development of forest school spaces to include wildlife ponds and amphitheatres with seating and canopies to allow outdoor learning in all weathers.

We are planning to implement night capture cameras at the forest school spaces at the Bromley Pensnett, Hob Green, and Princethorpe schools to capture local wildlife diversity including badgers and foxes that currently use these spaces.



Supply Chain

Review of the Year

Modern supply chains, where several companies are part of creating one product, present a serious challenge around a range of complex issues such as modern slavery, human rights, workplace exploitation and environmental impact. Furthermore, our suppliers' waste and emissions contribute to the Trust's upstream environmental impacts and increase our carbon footprint. We are committed to better understanding our supply chain and working towards greater transparency and responsibility regarding the suppliers we choose. We review contracts on an annual basis and are moving towards Trust-wide procurement, more rigorous vetting of new and existing suppliers, and ESG-led tendering.

As part of our movement towards a supply chain that is more closely aligned with our sustainability goals, we have gradually centralised our purchasing over the last year, including energy, sanitary waste collection, telephone contracts, and IT licenses as well as statutory maintenance contracts. We have introduced supplier procedures and our own contracting terms and conditions are currently under review, with revisions to be implemented from September 2021.

This process has been guided by ESPO frameworks, which we have used to procure several goods and services including washroom services. ESPO is a public sector owned professional buying organisation (PBO) that specialises in providing goods and services to the public sector.



Being a PBO member means that any surplus made after recovering costs is returned to the public purse. which aligns with our values and charitable purpose.

Catering

'The food is lovely and beautifully presented.'

In 2020 the Trust went out to tender for one of our largest contracts, our catering provision. The basis of the tender was to identify a company that would deliver the Gold Food for Life Standard across the Trust. The Food for Life Programme was developed by the Soil Association, a charity campaigning for healthy, humane, and sustainable food, farming, and land use.

The tender was awarded to Chartwells, a member of Compass Group UK. The Trust felt that their vision and values best reflected those of the Trust and all schools moved to this supplier in September 2020. We have now achieved the Gold Award for our menus which means

we take great care that our food is healthy, ethical, uses lots of local ingredients, and is animal and climate friendly. We use a minimum of 15% organic and 5% free range ingredients in our menus, sourced wherever possible from local farms. We have engaged parents and pupils in taster sessions to encourage take-up of free school meals from the earliest age. The sessions include learning about the negative impacts of sugar consumption and the importance of eating fresh fruit and vegetables, as well as take-home information for families and lots of tasty menu samples. Feedback from these sessions has been very positive, with parents reporting that the sessions gave their pupils more confidence to take up free meals despite English language difficulties and fussy eating habits. The sessions also gave parents confidence that special dietary requirements, such as coeliac disease, are being catered for.

Cleaning

Cleaning and infection control have been a major concern for us over the reporting period and specifically in relation to maintaining COVID-19 safe practices. We are currently trialling Stabilised Aqueous Ozone (SAO) cleaning systems at Audley Primary School. Rather than using harsh and toxic chemicals to clean, the system uses an organic, biologically safe, and effective process to infuse tap water with oxygen, attracting germs, soils, and bacteria, and eliminating contaminants. After the cleaning process, SAO safely reverts to water and oxygen molecules, eliminating 80% of chemicals from the site.

Supply Chain

Planning for the Next Year

The Trust is keen to continue developing our partnership with Chartwells catering services to deliver high quality healthy food consistently across all Trust schools. This will include the provision of Breakfast Club facilities across all schools.

If the SAO cleaning systems trial proves successful, we will roll the system out across the Trust. Additionally, washroom services for two of our schools are now managed by phs Group, with all schools planned to move to this contract as their current contracts expire. Goods and services we will procure from phs Group include water-efficient washroom fixtures, landfill diversion for sanitary waste, and matting made from sustainable materials.

For this coming year we will be implementing a new supplier questionnaire for all contractors including questions about their ESG actions and objectives to ensure all potential contractors are fully aware of our values and commitment to safe and sustainable development.



Carbon Footprint

Table 3

	tCO ₂ e	tCO ₂ e%
Scope 1	654.3	77%
Scope 2	198.5	23%
Gross Emissions	852.9	100%
Low Carbon Electricity	(70.1)	(8%)
Net Emissions	782.8	-

'Through our energy use, we produce enough carbon dioxide to fill 170 hot air balloons!'

Review of the Year

Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are the leading cause of the planet's rapidly changing climate. The Trust is aware of its corporate responsibility to reduce its overall emissions to support global efforts to address the climate crisis.

In 2019, the Climate Commission for UK Higher and Further Education advised that all universities and colleges should aim for net zero GHG emissions for Scope 1 and Scope 2 by 2030 as a minimum, as per the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) recommendations. We are not aware of a similar agenda specifically aimed at the primary school sector but are determined to play our part in achieving this goal and hopefully in advance of the deadline. To this end, we can report that we have begun to measure our emissions at a Trust-wide level.

Carbon footprint is a measure that enables us to understand our important sources of emissions. To calculate our carbon footprint, we are reporting on partial Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions, for which we are responsible.

Scope 1 emissions are the direct emissions that we as a group of schools can control. This year, we are reporting only on gas usage in buildings.

Scope 2 emissions are the indirect emissions from electricity purchased and used by our schools.

The breakdown of our carbon emissions in each of these areas is shown in Table 3. Due to limited data availability regarding our transport emissions, this year we are only reporting on our energy emissions. Through this calculation our gross carbon emissions for the year were found to be 852.9 tCO_oe.



The Journey to Net Zero

We recognise that the most effective contribution we can make towards the fight against climate change is to reduce energy consumption and emissions. As we work towards responsible practices and reduce our waste and energy consumption, we are taking various actions to mitigate our immediate effect upon the environment. Over the next year, we will gather data to report on our company transport emissions as well as Scope 3 emissions, including the carbon emitted from our staff's work-related travel. We also plan to improve our supply chain vetting process, to minimise our upstream impacts. In future years, we will consider offsetting our carbon emissions, following a feasibility analysis of our budget.





Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic

No report would be complete without consideration of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our organisation at every level. The pandemic has imposed many unforeseen challenges for pupils, families, communities, and our workforce. No-one has escaped being impacted and for many this has been and continues to be a difficult and upsetting time. A widescale and sophistically co-ordinated response has been required by the Trust to keep our pupils and staff safe and healthy, and to support our wider communities in coping with the crisis. This has consumed enormous additional amounts of time and energy which must be acknowledged.

Our staff have been amazing in their responses and have lived our values in the extreme. They have supported the implementation of extensive measures to reduce the possibility of transmission of the virus, from making class bubble segregation work, through to the installation of an additional 21 stainless steel external sink units across the Trust, enabling a greater number of entrances to be utilised to reduce congestion. They have also developed a high-quality Remote Education offer for pupils of every age who are unable to attend school. This places clear expectations on pupils to continue to engage with learning and to enjoy lessons at home with the support of parents and carers. We are incredibly proud of every member of our Trust team.

Schools implemented a range of ever-changing government COVID-19 educational guidance as the

response needs to the pandemic changed. Additional supervision was provided for Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) and other staff requiring support. We introduced flexible working, with staff having the option to complete planning, preparation, and assessment (PPA) at home, and we are assessing feasibility to continue this option beyond COVID-19. Throughout this challenging period, we have actively sought feedback from staff and parents through on-line surveys.

We have been particularly pleased to have been able to support other trusts to develop their COVID-19 safe practices. We helped the Hamstead Hall Academy Trust and Cromwell Learning Community Trust in the formatting and implementation of their schools' risk assessments and associated systems of control and staff training seminars. We delivered bespoke risk assessment training to 66 members of the Birmingham Catholic Partnership School, including governors and senior leadership teams. Finally, the Trust supported the Waverley Education Foundation Limited in auditing its COVID-19 Risk Assessment, associated control measures, and individual departmental risk assessments.

Face to face classroom teaching is the mainstay of education and was seriously disrupted for a large part of the year. The crisis has also highlighted the difficulties faced by pupils who experience the greatest degree of challenge in their lives, and who are from the most disadvantaged backgrounds. It is these pupils who

have most missed the benefit of direct interaction with teachers and teaching assistants. Catching up on lost learning time will be a significant, complex, and difficult task over the coming year and will focus on:

- · Reducing learning gaps across all phases due to loss of school time during COVID-19
- % of pupils achieving a good level of development (GLD)
- % of pupils achieving age related expectations at KS1 and KS2
- % of pupils working at greater depth
- Increased rates of pupil progress
- Consistency of teaching quality within and across schools
- Continued improvement in rates of attendance and reduction in persistent absence
- · Continued downward trajectory in rate of fixed and permanent exclusions
- Greater engagement of parents in pupils's learning

Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Support for All

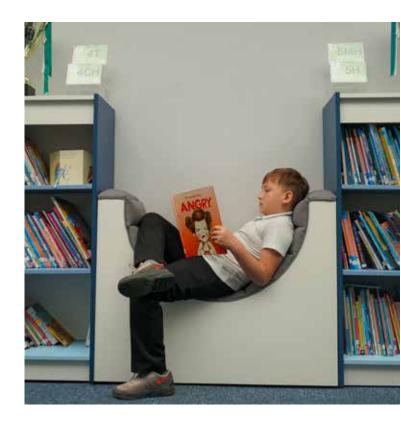
School closures and the impact of self-isolation and illness have affected most of our families and the families of our staff in some way or another. To minimise this as much as possible, we have taken full advantage of all available Catch-up Premium funding to support training and development for staff and supportive interventions for pupils assessed to be most in need.

Most training has taken place on Microsoft Teams, with very limited opportunities for face-to-face training. We foresee taking a more blended approach moving forward, with online sessions being used where appropriate to limit travel and maximise time available. In this spirit, senior leaders have maximised time working online together. More training has been pre-recorded to enable staff to access materials at their convenience. This has ensured that effective training could continue and was delivered to the greatest number of participants. In 2020, most of our staff training was provided by the Severn Teaching School Alliance (STSA), with schools sending participants as needed. During the summer lockdown, STSA provided online training for some schools to access around curriculum development, including:

Click 4 Learning – 3 each of English and mathematics sessions were held. Attendance was not tracked but all schools sent at least one person to each.

- Specialist Leaders of Education (SLE) training for School Improvement Practitioners (SIP) - 15 participants – 3 x online sessions – 2 hrs each.
- Recently Qualified Teacher (RQT) Training 16 participants - 4 ½ day sessions via Teams.
- Middle Leaders 16 participants 6 full days via Teams.
- Reading for Pleasure (Rf) multiple Teams meetings across the year with multiple participants.
- Reading Pedagogies 6 participants 3 ½ day sessions - took place at Hob Green Primary.

Moving forward, the Trust has identified priorities for school improvement, and these are set out in the Trust's *Annual Roadmap*. Priorities for 2020-21 include developing middle leaders and RQTs, and scaling up our Reading for Pleasure and Pedagogies of Reading programmes to improve pupils's language and literacy.





Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Throughout the pandemic the Trust has retained a very strong commitment to achieving equality of opportunity in its services to school communities, and in its staffing and recruitment. We continue to expect all staff to:

- understand, comply with, and promote Trust policies in their own work.
- engage with and undertake appropriate training,
- promote inclusive practices, and
- challenge racism, prejudice, and discrimination.

This requires every employee taking responsibility for their own behaviour, and proactively supporting others when necessary to challenge inappropriate behaviour and to protect the health and wellbeing of colleagues and families, and above all our pupils. While some activities have been interrupted due to the pandemic. schools have participated in many initiatives aimed at promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion. These include Black History Month, Show Racism the Red Card fundraising drives, Mental Health Week, Autism Awareness Week, Red Nose Day, and Cyber Safety Week.

Schools have run anti-bullying campaigns and have held assemblies about young carers, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Pupil (UNCRC), British Values, and different religious festivals. They have engaged with the Jigsaw personal, social, health, and

economic (PSHE) unit 'Celebrating Difference', held inclusive sports events, and covered diversity content in the curriculum.

As one organisation we will continue to:

- take a dynamic approach to driving continuous improvement in teaching and learning through research, teacher inquiry, supportive challenge, staff development, and peer-to-peer collaboration,
- listen to the voice of pupils, parents, staff, trustees, and other stakeholders.
- support our schools to work together to improve the quality of teaching, curriculum provision, and leadership capacity.
- support our school leaders to inspire and influence others, leading by example and playing an active part in wider Trust improvement, and
- create outward-facing schools that engage with local, national, and international partnerships to access expertise, professional development, and improvement support.

We believe our culture and ethos of achievement and aspiration supports every pupil to succeed and look forward to a bright and fulfilling future.





Future Aims

Our annual sustainability impact reports will provide updates on our specific plans and aims for the year ahead, as these plans develop. In addition to maintaining current achievements in the RRSA, in 2021-22 we would like to participate in the Eco-Schools framework across all schools within the Trust.

We would like to implement a Sustainability Champion at each school who can lead on communicating and coordinating initiatives. Through a mini-survey and during informal conversations, teachers have expressed interest in involving pupils in school environmental projects. Some ideas we will be exploring include

providing space and support for pupils to grow their own food on school grounds to be used for school dinners. waste disposal programmes, and getting groups of pupils involved in award schemes.

We also have plans to consider sustainability projects on a larger scale, for example undertaking feasibility assessments for building retrofits; reviewing our utilities procurement including renewable energy sources and recycling programmes; engaging our supply chain in our ESG aims; and developing our outdoor learning spaces.

To support the achievement of these aims, we intend

to continue to use the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals to raise the profile of this area of our work and involve the pupils and local community more actively than ever in this important work. The United Nations COP 26 Climate Change Conference and staging of the Commonwealth Games 2022 in Birmingham will provide an additional platform through which to demonstrate our commitment and show case work in exciting and purposeful ways.





Last Words and Acknowledgements

We are proud of the work we have done so far, particularly as we have faced the additional and enormous challenge of keeping our schools open over the period of the pandemic for as many pupils as possible.

We recognise that there is plenty of room to develop not only our approaches but also our impact.

Our new Sustainability sub-committee and champions will be instrumental in building our vision and strategy for increased educational, social, environmental and energy impact.

As part of our forward thinking, we aim to expand our partnership working with other Trusts and develop a clearer ambition around support for staff and pupil health and wellbeing. An important part of this work will be to consider the impact of our school environments in terms of supporting mental health and pupils's capacity to regulate and manage their emotions and behaviours. For example, we are keen to research aspects of biophilic design which brings nature more directly into the classroom environment through such things as houseplants and natural objects.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that the Trust wants to and is able to drive change at pace. From increasing support to individual families to mobilising a whole remote education programme from nursery to year

six, we have demonstrated a commitment to effecting transformational change to improve the education and life chances of all our pupils.

We also have a developing story of how we have become an increasingly collaborative Trust that ensures innovation and ideas are coming from a diverse range of voices. This is helping us to make sure everyone is heard, and no-one is overlooked, as we continue to focus on raising educational standards and reducing educational inequalities. We look forward to continuing to grow our sustainable advantage models, approaches, and programmes as an important part of our school improvement work.

This first Sustainable Advantage Report acknowledges the work and contribution of every trustee, member of staff, parent, carer, and individual pupil. All have been magnificent in their support and help over what has been a very difficult period. We are emerging stronger and more determined than ever to achieve our ambition for our schools and communities. We are also looking forward to an even brighter future!



As part of our desire to ensure we adopt best practice within ESG, drb Ignite engaged Sustainable Advantage to score drb Ignite across 59 ESG areas. Each area is graded 0 – 4 with an overall score rebased to 100. An ESG action plan has been created following the scoring process and disseminated to the individual departments under the overall management of the ESG Committee. This process will ensure continued improvement during 2021. We are tracking our progress year-on-year.

Working in partnership with:



An intelligent approach to energy, waste & sustainability

Sustainable Advantage Hersham Place Technology Park Molesey Road, Hersham Walton-on-Thames Surrey KT12 4RS

info@sustainable-advantage.com sustainable-advantage.com 0203 544 2030

