



David Ross Education Trust

Broadening Horizons

Strategy 2019 - 2022



| Broadening Horizons |



Over the last two years, the Trust has made significant progress towards its aim of a World Class Education. Whilst there is more to do, this summer's results show just how far we have come in a short space of time.

I am particularly proud of the achievements that we are seeing in our primary schools, with 69% of children achieving the required standard in the combined measure of reading, writing and mathematics, 4% ahead of national performance, and showing a 6% point improvement on our last year's results. So too is our performance strong across subjects, with performance against national above for writing and mathematics and in line for reading. Similarly with disadvantaged pupils, we continue to see improving performance, with 61% of disadvantaged children meeting the combined standard.

These results prove that our knowledge-based primary curriculum and school improvement methodology works. We now need to replicate that success in our secondary schools, where improvement to date has not been sufficiently rapid, and outcomes continue to lag behind national averages.

I want the combination of academic excellence hand in hand with sector-leading enrichment opportunities to become DRET's calling card; the gap between the quality of education that is available in the state sector compared to that of the independent sector is today narrower than it ever has been, and I want DRET academies to contribute to an acceleration of that trend.

This strategy sets out our approach for the coming three years to achieving our ambition of a World Class Education for all children within our schools, broadening horizons and increasing the aspiration and ambition amongst our staff and students. 2019 – 2022 will see us move ever closer to that ambition.



A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "David Ross".

David Ross,
Sponsor and Chairman.





When I joined the David Ross Education Trust in 2017 I inherited an organisation that did not have a unifying approach or common culture: expectations of both staff and students were unclear, and the organisation was struggling to break out of a cycle of under-performance in both the primary and secondary sectors. Furthermore, the Trust's finance and operations functions had not evolved to meet the needs of a large, corporate organisation and were costly and inefficient distractions from the core business of education.

My focus over the last two years has been to create a sense of common endeavour, underpinned by successes in curriculum development and school improvement, and in so doing, creating a platform for sustainable success and, ultimately, system leadership.

We have had some notable successes as articulated by David Ross in his introduction, but we also recognise the need to develop more fundamentally and with a gathering pace if we are to compete with the best and provide an education that is truly world class.

This strategy document provides the landscape for our trust improvement for the next three years, during which time we will not only become financially sustainable, we will also perform consistently ahead of the sector averages across key measures.

I want everyone to be absolutely clear about our Trust priorities for the coming three years – both what we will be focusing on, and what we will not.

Our education strategy is in three distinct strands: our curriculum; our behaviour and culture; and the quality of teaching in our academies. These are the three main ingredients that will help us deliver on our promise of a World Class Education that broadens the horizons of every young person in our care.

But alongside this, we are also prioritising health and wellbeing, and improving the operational support that underpins our schools, with a particular focus on financial sustainability and the attraction, development and retention of talented staff.

This strategy document aims to provide us with a clarity of purpose and a guiding light to steer us through the coming period.

Rowena Hackwood,
CEO.

Our Mission

Our mission is to broaden the horizons of all our pupils through the provision of a world-class education.

Our Vision

Our mission is underpinned by a vision for a world-class education that is ambitious, broad and knowledge-rich, and that equips our pupils to live full, rich and successful lives.

Our Values

We are unashamedly **ambitious** for the children and young people that we serve. We want to provide access to opportunities within the classroom and beyond.

We are highly **aspirational** and expect all of our children and staff to aim high academically. We will provide staff with the skills and knowledge to teach well and create a culture where high-performance is expected.

We are **courageous**, trying new strategies, thinking big and not being afraid to take measured risks in our pursuit of excellence.

We are **respectful**, creating an environment of calm, scholarly endeavour in our classrooms, and respecting the professional integrity of all staff across academic and business functions.



Overview

The David Ross Education Trust is a network of unique and diverse academies, committed to becoming one of the top-performing multi-academy trusts in the country. Recognised as one of 11 system leaders nationwide, we work with 34 primary and secondary schools across the country.

Our schools create a rich and exciting learning environment that inspires students to become their confident, academic best.

We are committed to giving every single one of our pupils a world-class education. An education that creates academically gifted, confident, well-rounded young people in the classroom, in the workplace and in their communities.

Our schools range from smaller rural primaries with around 50 children, to much larger secondary schools in the centre of urban areas.

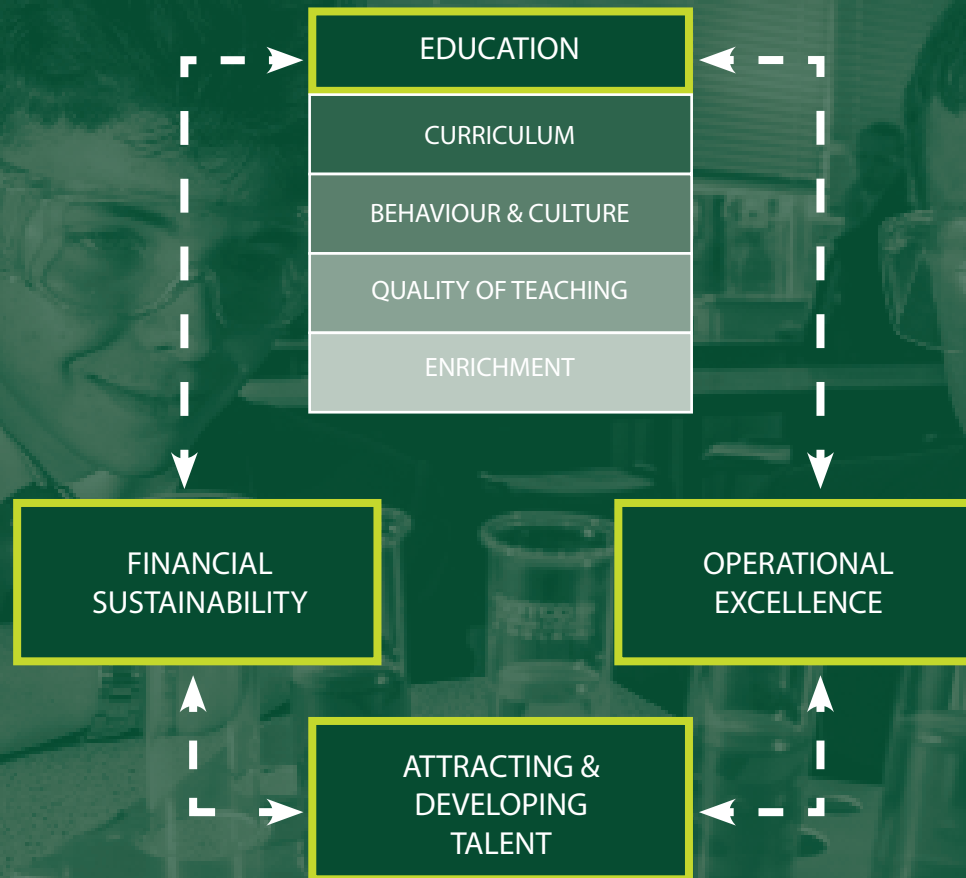
Working together, with a shared ethos and values, our close-knit family of schools allows pupils to begin and continue their world-class academic journey throughout primary and secondary school within the David Ross Education Trust.

The next three years will see us ramp up our efforts to achieve our ambition of a World Class Education, broadening horizons and increasing the aspiration and ambition amongst our staff and students.

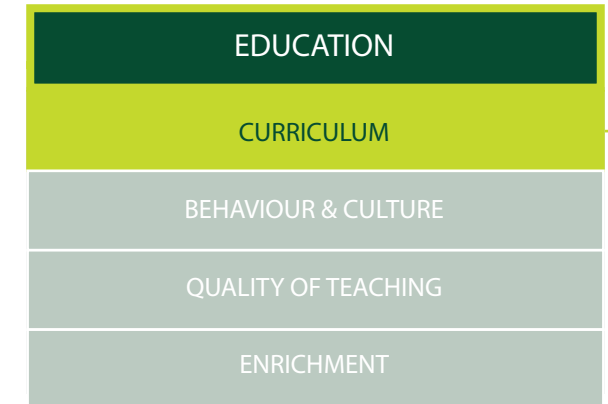
Our work will focus on curriculum, behaviour and culture, and the quality of teaching. There will also be a renewed focus on health and wellbeing, and the wider operational support that ensures our schools run smoothly.



Delivering our vision



We take a “balanced scorecard” approach to running our Trust, lining up our support functions to enable the delivery of excellence in our classrooms.



Knowledge-led curricula attempt to provide young people with a school experience that enables them to be socially mobile, for this is at the core of what social justice is: enabling all people, regardless of socio-economic background, to be provided with the opportunities to succeed in life.

Christine Counsell.



→ We value the acquisition of powerful knowledge as a goal in itself and as an entitlement for all children. To achieve this, we are investing time and resources in the development of a rigorous and challenging curriculum at all key stages that is shared by all schools within the Trust.

Our primary curriculum is already well-advanced whilst work on our secondary curriculum for Key Stage 3 is well under way with all schools delivering common strategies for reading and Year 7/8 English from September 2019.

To deliver the quality of curriculum that will deliver our world-class vision, we will:

In our primaries: continue to develop and refine our common approaches to reading, writing and mathematics, wrapped around with our Core Knowledge Curriculum (CKC) we will develop the subject knowledge of our teachers (see our Talent priorities) to ensure that the curriculum creates deep cultural capital and enhances pupils' understanding of the world.

Our aim is that we remain consistently one of the top performing primary trusts in the country, with a growing number of children achieving the "Greater Depth" standard, and the disadvantage gap disappearing completely.

In our secondaries: our focus for 2019/20 is on the development of knowledge-rich curriculum for Key Stage 3 across all subjects, with a view to a September 2020 roll-out. This curriculum development is led by the Trust's subject lead specialists, supported by newly-created subject communities, drawing on talent from across all the Trust's secondary academies.

In advance of the 2020 roll-out, the Trust has put in place broad curriculum alignment to enable common assessment to take place at KPI points throughout 2019/20.

Our belief is that a knowledge-rich well-thought-out curriculum with clearly articulated logic and intent, will equip the Trust's secondary students to achieve their full potential at Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5.

We are confident that our approach set out in this strategy will deliver academic outcomes that are amongst the best in the country, and are proven to be so through:

- results at the end of each of key stage (with targets above national average on all measures);
- improvements in attendance (again, with a target above national average);
- the take-up of EBACC (with a target of 90% entry by 2024); and
- by external evaluation by Ofsted and others.





→ We hold unapologetically high expectation for, and of, the pupils in our system and the staff within our schools. We have articulated our expectations explicitly in all of our schools, and are constantly raising our game to ensure that boundaries are clear and rules and routines are established, so that students feel safe, calm and ready to learn in every DRET school and classroom.

Over the last two years, we have seen a radical shift in our approach to behaviour and culture amongst our staff, particularly in our primary schools, where peer support, challenge and collaboration have become the norm. Through our programmes of training, live coaching, and collaborative curriculum development, we are driving collaboration further and deeper into our DNA, using what works well, and challenging and innovating as new ideas and new research come to the fore.

This consistency of expectations is also the hallmark of practice in our classrooms, driven by the research that demonstrates that children, particularly those from a disadvantaged background, learn best where variations between classes are smaller (Reynolds 2012).

We believe that every child should be able to learn free from disruption and that every teacher should be respected as a



Cultures within schools require deliberate creation. A key role of leadership is to design a detailed vision of what the culture should look like for each school, focusing on the social and academic conduct. Expectations must be as high as possible for all.

Tom Bennett, *Creating a Positive Culture*



professional, able to teach brilliant lessons uninterrupted.

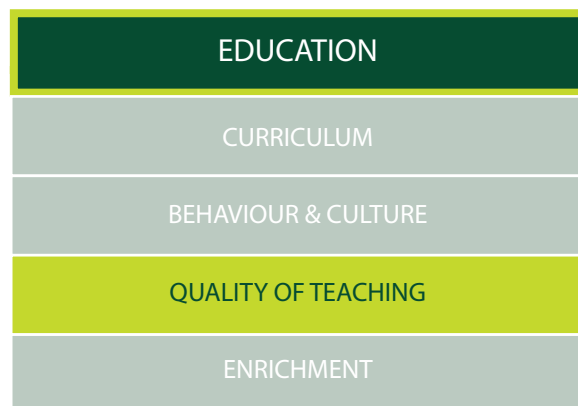
Across DRET, we have adopted a “warm: strict” philosophy; this means all staff having high expectations for students, and being explicit about the behaviours they expect to see, holding boundaries firmly. But we also place equal priority on building positive relationships with students and their families, and rewarding excellence and effort.

Our priority in this area is to ensure that all primaries continue to raise their game, particularly ensuring that those which have historically lagged below the national average develop a culture in which exceeding this for both the expected and the greater depth standard become the norm.

For our secondaries, our goals are more specific. We have developed and are embedding our explicit behaviour and culture expectations in our ‘DRET Way’ documents during 2019/2020. These are underpinned by staff training and whole school ‘re-sets’, to ensure that the requirements of the ‘Way’ are being faithfully and consistently implemented.

Alongside this we are relaunching our House system to drive a greater sense of ‘belonging’ in our schools.





Many of the skills taught in classrooms can be conveyed by providing prompts, modelling use of the prompt, and then guiding students as they gain independence. One characteristic of effective teachers is their ability to anticipate students' errors and warn them about possible errors some of them are likely to make.

Barak Rosenshine



We believe that teachers should be experts and leaders in their classrooms and it is the responsibility of the Trust's leaders to ensure that teachers are equipped to play this role. In both primaries and secondaries, we recognise the importance of the expert knowledge of teaching and expert subject knowledge.

Our focus for the next three years will be to ensure that every teacher is trained using evidence-based approaches to ensure they pass on their knowledge to students in the most direct and effective ways, ensuring that it is learnt, remembered, and supports every child to achieve their full potential.

During 2019 – 2022, we will further develop our training toolkit, equipping staff with excellent curriculum tools and professional development appropriate to their career stage., enabling them to develop as professionals and subject experts, teach well, be inspired by the subject(s), and inspire their students.

Our strategies for teaching are set out in our Teaching and Learning Policy, and are based on Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction: through consistent implementation of these principles, we will give children – particularly those from a disadvantaged background – the best possible chance of excelling.



EDUCATION

CURRICULUM

BEHAVIOUR & CULTURE

QUALITY OF TEACHING

ENRICHMENT

The Trust is acknowledged as a national leader in the terms of the breadth, range and quality of enrichment opportunities from which our DRET students benefit.

From music and sport to arts and culture, DRET's offer seeks to enrich the lives of all students irrespective of their start in life.

Throughout the period of 2019 – 2022, the Trust will continue to offer Talent Days, All Star Programmes, Trust-wide events, competitions and once-in-a-lifetime master-classes.



Sports and wellbeing

The Trust will continue to deliver a programme of sport, taking our students from the early days of physical literacy in EYFS and Key Stage 1, through to active lifestyle choice, competitive sport, and elite opportunities as they progress through our schools.

In our primaries, we will continue to deliver our Horizons programme, setting our pupils up to take healthy life-style choices before progressing into more sport-specific programmes in Years 3 – 6.

The Trust Participation Pyramid:

Mass participation through to elite opportunities



In our secondaries, we will continue to work with PE departments to embed sport within the curriculum and maintain the opportunity for students to engage in sport and physical activity in school.

We are proud of our elite partnerships and will continue to develop our table tennis, basketball, football, netball, rugby, and other partnerships to provide outstanding opportunities for students alongside their academic studies.

Mental health and wellbeing

During the period 2019 – 2022, we will ramp up our Trust-wide mental health and wellbeing programmes recognising that this is an area of national crisis, and one in which we can have significant positive impact. In particular, we will be focusing on mental health for both our pupils and staff in our primaries and secondaries, as well as focusing on childhood obesity.

Leveraging our best-in-class sports provision, we want to become the leading trust in combating childhood obesity. Alongside a focus on physical activity, this will also include advice and support on diet and positive eating choices, and over the next three years, we want all of our academies to achieve the Gold Award in the schools Food for Life mark.

Building on our success to date, we have an ambitious set of targets for the coming three years:

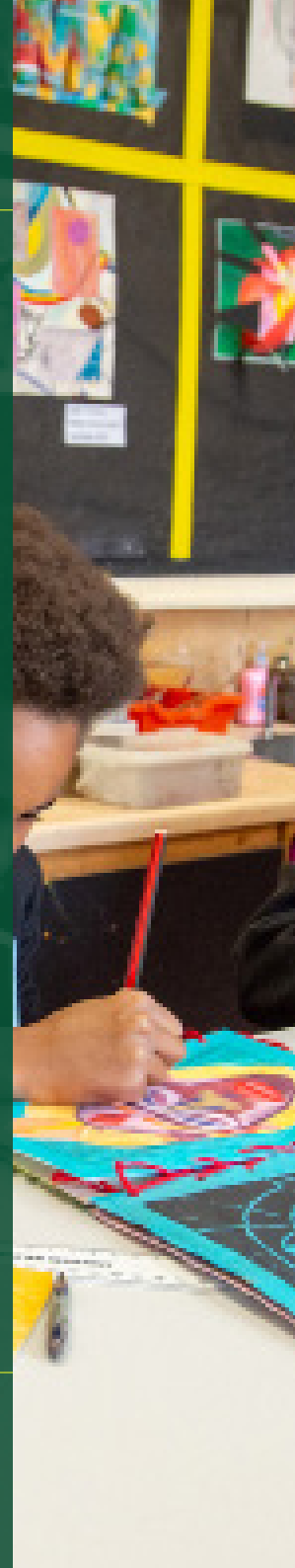
- 75% of academies achieve a gold or silver healthy school rating kite mark from the DfE
- Increase number of students doing five or more sessions of sport per term by a minimum of 5%
- Introduce hockey to our All Stars portfolio
- Maintain current 6th Form sport academies and introduce two new 6th Form sport academies across
- Maintain the Horizon programme in all primary academies and increase number of gold star awards by 5%
- Increase the overall number of secondary student visits to sports enrichment clubs and fixtures by 5,000 per year
- Increase % of EAL, SEN and Pupil Premium students accessing the sports programme by 3% annually
- Introduce new SEN DRET wide event
- Introduce three higher level sporting specialisms across our primary network
- Increase the number of students on our County level or above talent register by 10%
- Win 10 National school titles across various sports
- Develop two new partnerships with elite sporting organisations



Cultural Education:

We proudly offer a cultural education programme as an integral part of our commitment to delivering a world-class education. We bring a range of cultural opportunities to our schools so that our students have the very best experience of their education with significantly improved life chances as a result.

The cultural programme is designed to sit above the general enrichment activity that schools will do of their own accord. The programme does not replace standard school enrichment such as school plays and productions, externals workshops and educational visits, but rather stands as an additional layer of high-quality opportunity to engage in.



Music

The music programme is a unique offer our schools; a programme which would otherwise be unavailable within the state sector. The programme presents life-changing opportunities to our students enabling them to experience music in inspirational and professional contexts. The curriculum builds a strong foundation of musical knowledge which will grow alongside their love of music fostered by the many events and opportunities on offer throughout the year.

Our aim is three-fold: to increase the number of students learning musical instruments and playing in instrumental ensembles/bands; to increase the number of students taking GCSE and A Level Music; and for all of our schools to become Singing Schools.



Drama

Our drama programme is delivered through a partnership with the Shakespeare Schools Festival, providing our schools an interactive and accessible method of engaging in Shakespeare.



Our approach encourages staff and students to consider the benefits of theatre work alongside the curriculum. It promotes in-school performance, developing oracy, communication and presentation skills. More importantly, drama emphasises the importance of listening skills.



Artsmark

The Artsmark is an accreditation offered by the Arts Council England. This accreditation acts as a benchmark for to determine our schools' engagement with the arts. With an increased acceptance of the importance of the Artsmark across the Trust, over the next three years our academies will further embrace the opportunities available to them. In that time, we are working towards all DRET academies having achieved an Artsmark status, with 50% at Gold or above.



Dance

Our Dance programme aims to provide a foundation for students to be able to enter dance in a meaningful way, signposting them to further pursuits in the field.

With the dance programme flourishing, this will provide a gateway for our most talented pupils to pursue the art-form with our partners signposting them on to greater challenges and opportunities.

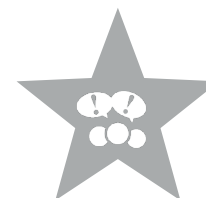
Our aim over the coming years is for 10% of participants across the Trust to continue on with dance after they have left us.



Debating

Our emerging debating and oracy programme will add strength and confidence to our students' voices, allowing them to express their ideas constructively, competing at the same level as their peers from more affluent areas.

We anticipate that participation in debating – both through clubs and competitions – will exceed 500 students across the Trust over the coming years.





FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

The financial pressures of the education sector are well documented, and we have worked hard to put ourselves in a sustainable financial position over the last two years.

Maintaining financial viability will never be easy, particularly in a context where our schools are on average 30% smaller than the average school size in England, and cover a very wide geographic spread. This means that the scope for sharing of teaching resources is limited. Notwithstanding this, we have a duty in expending public funds to ensure that we can demonstrate great value, and benefit from the economies of scale that a trust structure can offer.

Our financial strategy covers four areas:

- GAG pooling and fair funding of all schools based on a common model, creating capacity for central curriculum development, professional development and school improvement.
- Cost reduction using a standardised model for support services to ensure fairness and parity between schools.
- Income generation by increasing pupil numbers, optimising lettings and other commercial and fundraising income, and the disposal of redundant assets.
- Rebuilding of reserves and endowment fund to ensure that we are sustainable in the medium term and able to continue to invest in our people and facilities.

We have adopted a 'Curriculum Based Budgeting model' (Integrated Curriculum and Financial Planning) across all of our schools, driven by the importance of fair and consistent funding across our schools. This model recognises local need and variation, but aims to ensure that all schools are funded to deliver the core business of teaching, learning and pupils' support.

This is a vital approach in enabling us to rebuild our reserves in a pragmatic manner, towards our long term target range of 5-10% of recurrent revenue income.

ATTRACTING & DEVELOPING TALENT

We are a people business. Our teachers, pastoral and support staff, whether in our classrooms or behind the scenes, are our greatest asset. Our success as an organisation is dependent on our ability to attract, develop and retain great talent. So, our focus over the coming three years is to build a culture and an offer that people want to join and remain part of. We want our people to develop their careers during their time with us and become vocal advocates for the David Ross Education Trust.

We will continue to develop our recruitment strategy so that we attract the best candidates, and we will continue our work on staff professional development, wherever possible supporting the development of our existing employees and creating innovative career paths across and between schools.

At an operational level, we will work to bring down the overall supply teacher bill through better timetabling and scheduling of training and time out-of-school, better use of digital meetings to prevent time out of school, and reduced sickness absence.

We are mindful of the stresses and strains of working in education and we are taking steps to support our staff in maintaining good mental health.



OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

We will further develop our operational management during 2019 – 2022, with a view to reducing costs and unnecessary administrative burdens from our front-line.

Over the period 2019 – 2022 we will focus on improving quality, timeliness, and saving money, through greater process efficiency, improved procurement, better use of IT to drive insight and improve decision making and data, and better training of support staff.

We will increase the role the central team will play in quality assurance and oversight, setting strategy and priorities for on-site staff to deliver.

Our core approach is to let experts be experts; we expect teaching and learning experts to lead teaching and learning. In the same way, we expect experts in HR, Finance and Operations to lead in these supporting disciplines.

So we will adopt the following strategies:

We have established a 'hub and spoke' delivery model, with some services (HR, Payroll, Finance, Major Contract Procurement, Governance and IT/Data) currently delivered centrally, and other services (Administration, Estates Management) governed centrally but managed or overseen locally.

We will retain and further develop this model, which allows professional expertise and quality standards to be established and overseen centrally. It provides us with greater oversight on costs as well as allowing us to achieve economies of scale. It also allows us to better manage areas of significant risk, including Health and Safety and Safer Recruitment, and enables capital works to be delivered in priority order.

School-based staff are expected to comply with Trust-wide quality expectations, processes and standards, and are audited through regular quality reviews.



Governance and accountability

As an academy trust, DRET deploys two forms of governance: Executive and Non-executive.

Non-executive Governance

The Trust's main governance focus is its Trust Board and Committees supported by Academy Scrutiny Committees at school level.

We ensure accountability as follows:

- Trust Board: Overview of Trust performance, key projects, finances and strategic risk
- Education Sub-Committee: Educational performance, specific projects and targets, including turnaround of under-performing schools
- Finance Committee: Finance and Operational performance, budget monitoring
- Audit and Risk Committee: Statutory audit functions, internal audit, risk management
- HR and Remuneration Committee: recruitment and retention, employee matters and industrial relations, executive pay, change programmes

At academy level, each school has a half-termly Academy Scrutiny Committees. These focus on education standards, student behaviour, quality of teaching, safeguarding and implementation of Trust strategies.

Our Academy Scrutiny Committees do not appoint or line manage the Principal (although they are often part of the process of both), or set or manage budgets or strategy as these are matters reserved to the executive in line with the Scheme of Delegation.

An important feature of our accountability model that Academy Scrutiny Committees often include Trust link directors with professional education experience. This is similar to the way in which local authority Principals may have sat on the Local Governing Bodies of neighbouring schools prior to the creation of MATs.

Because of the role of executive governance and access to extensive central HR, Finance and other business skills, it is less important for schools to have local governors with these backgrounds than in smaller Trusts.

The work programme for each committee at both school and Trust level is agreed at the start of the year to ensure appropriate focus and challenge in driving up standards.





Executive Governance

Executive governance is delivered through line management of the Principal, via the Regional Director, Director of Primary or Secondary, and the CEO. Executive governance focuses on setting and delivering challenging but deliverable KPIs at each school, and ensures that the Head is held to account for the achievement of these KPIs.

The CEO leads executive governance, and as the Accounting Officer for all schools within the Trust is ultimately is accountable for standards in all schools. Trust-level directors and Regional Directors champion the Trust's vision and strategies, act as both support and challenge, enable a culture of both ambition and honesty to be developed, and advocate for the needs of schools.

Executive and Non-Executive Accountability

Members

- Determine the Trust's Constitution
- Appoints external auditors
- Ambassadors for the Trust
- High level monitoring of the overall effectiveness of the MAT
- Last line of resort in holding the Trust board to account.

Governors (Academy Scrutiny Committees)

- Oversight of the academy's delivery of the Trust's vision in terms of learning and standards (Academy Improvement Plan)
- Supporting and holding the Principal to account for academic performance, quality of care and provision, community engagement, pupil premium/sports premium, safeguarding.

Trust Board (Charity Trustees/ Company Directors)

- Strategic oversight, setting vision and policies
- Ensuring appropriate governance and decision making
- Oversight of finances, setting budgets and effective use of funds
- Setting targets and holding Executives to account
- Reviewing Trust performance

Executive Management (CEO, Executive Directors, Regional Directors)

- Development and delivery of the Trust's Strategy and policy
- Day to day running and leadership of the Trust
- Executive responsibility for setting budgets, managing finances and ensuring proper use of public funds.
- Executive responsibility for delivering excellent educational provision
- Review and report to the Trust Board on progress against priority objectives
- Line Management of the Principal

Principal (Executive Manager)

- Leadership of the academy, secure its success and improvement, ensuring high quality education for all pupils and good standards of learning achievement
- Implementing agreed Trust policies and procedures including compliance and statutory regulations
- Academy staff leadership and management
- Delivery of excellent educational provision

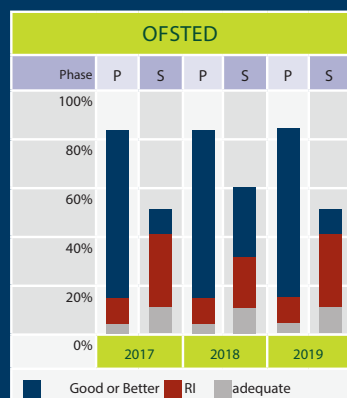
Executive Governance = 'executive responsibility' for running the Trust's business. Executive directors are Trust employees

Non-Executive Governance = challenge, questions and monitor the Executive management; bring on independent perspective to decision-making; they hold Executive to account; selected and appointed for their personal qualities, experience and specialist knowledge. A volunteer, NOT a Trust employee, receives no payment or financial benefit.

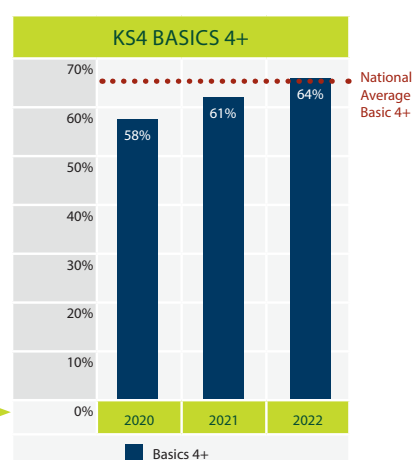
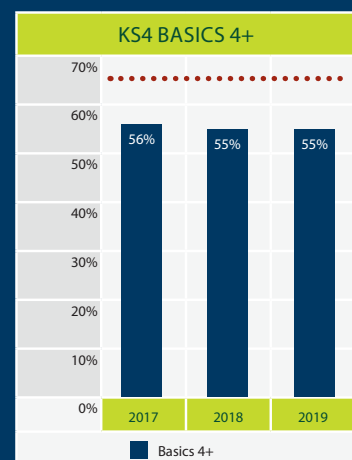
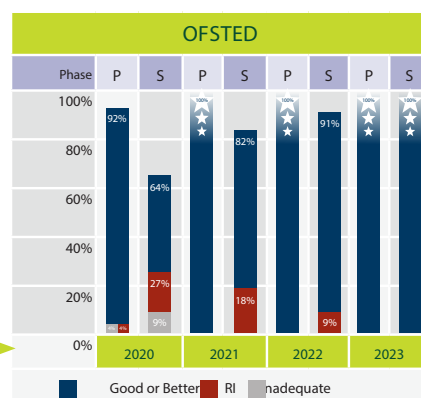


Headline performance to date and to 2023

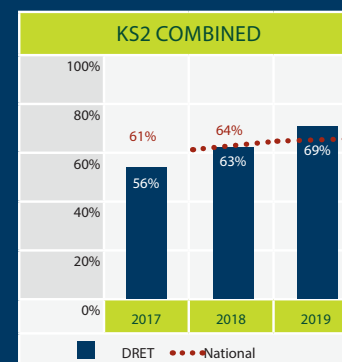
TO DATE



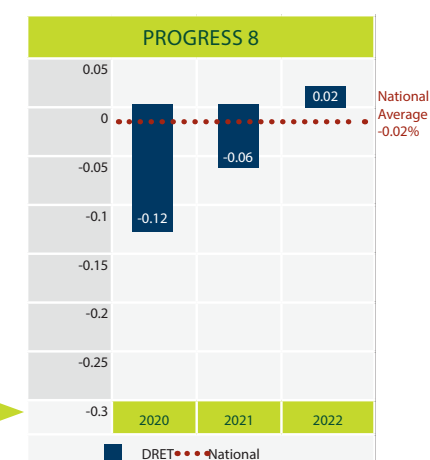
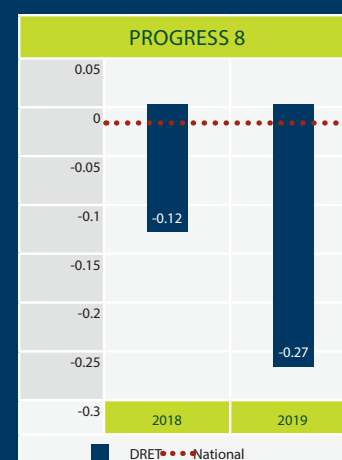
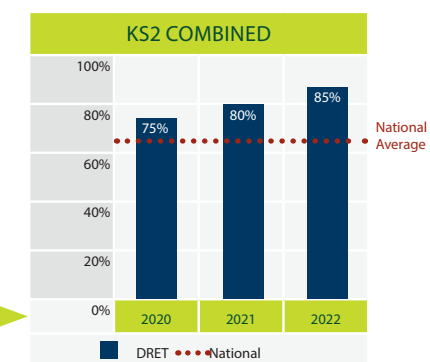
FUTURE TARGETS



TO DATE



FUTURE TARGETS



2019/20: Management of strategic risks

Risk management is a key part of the Management Operations Board structure, and risk is reported to, and discussed with, Trustees on a regular basis.

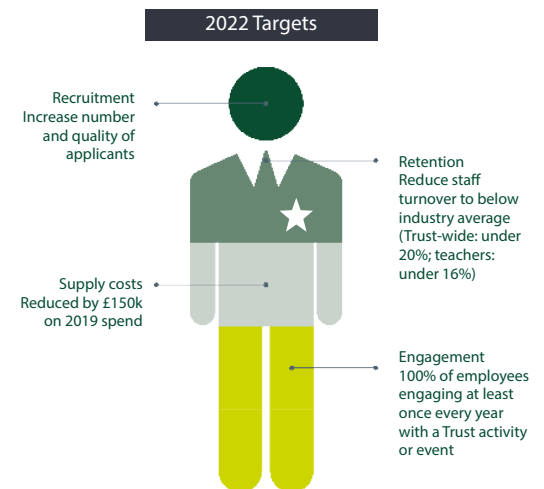
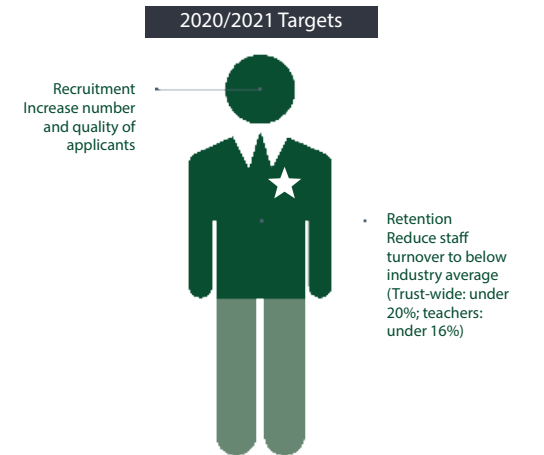
2019/20 top risks:

1. Strategic: improving educational outcomes in Secondaries
2. Financial: delivering value for money
3. Financial: achieving in-year net surplus position
4. Financial: achieving financial sustainability in the medium to long term
5. Operational: managing effective safeguarding in school and on trips
6. Operational: effective health and safety management, risk assessment and planning
7. Operational: effective management of critical incident and ensuring business continuity
8. Operational: management of data security
9. Operational: attracting and retaining key staff

PRIMARY PROJECTS AND PERFORMANCE TARGETS 2019/22			
	2020 Target	2021 Target	2022 Target
★ Ofsted	100% Good or better 32% Outstanding 41% Outstanding features	40% Outstanding 60% Outstanding features	Almost all schools Outstanding at next inspection
Attainment – % of pupils at expected Standard in Reading, Writing and Maths	75%	80%	85%
Attainment – % of pupils at Greater Depth in Reading, Writing and Maths	20%	30%	30%
Attendance	96.1%	(+0.3% against national average)	(+0.3% against national average)

SECONDARY PROJECTS AND PERFORMANCE TARGETS 2019/22			
	2020 Target	2021 Target	2022 Target
Key Stage 4 – % of pupils securing 4+ and 5+	58%/34%	61%/38%	64%/43%
Key Stage 4 – Progress 8	-0.12	-0.06	0.02
Attendance	94.8%	95.6%	96.4%

FINANCE AND OPERATIONS TARGETS 2019/22			
	2020 Target	2021 Target	2022 Target
Balanced Budget	In line with projections	In line with projections	In line with projections
Surpluses	In line with projections	In line with projections	In line with projections
Income from site commercialisation	150,000	200,000	500,000
Wider commercial income and fundraising	150,000	200,000	250,000





David Ross Education Trust

Broadening Horizons

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For enquiries related to working for the Trust or one of our Academies please email: recruitment@dret.co.uk

For media enquiries please contact: Kamila Borkowska, Marketing & Communications Manager, 07702 513890