PIONEER LEARNING TRUST

Pursuing Excellence and Equity

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PIONEER LEARNING TRUST

Pursuing Excellence and Equity

Welcome To The Pioneer Learning Trust

We are proud to be a values-based Trust, working as a collaborative family of schools. We engage with our pupils, our teams and our communities driven by aspiration, respect, unity, integrity, quality, enjoyment and independence.

In the Pioneer Learning Trust we have a common vision – to pursue excellence and equity in a values-based context. To us, this is a commitment to ensuring that all children have the opportunity to excel, and do so in an inclusive, values-based ethos where diversity is celebrated. We are much more than a group of schools, we are a committed family of dedicated professionals collaborating to inspire our pupils with an exceptional learning experience.

Serving diverse communities, many with high levels of disadvantage, our dedicated staff teams are focused on redressing the inequity experienced by many of our pupils, ensuring that all pupils maximise their potential. Standards in our schools are high and constantly improving. We have specialist expertise in utilising Pupil Premium to achieve maximum impact.

Our ambitious Trust is growing rapidly and in 2025 we have welcomed Lakeview School, Warden Hill Infant Academy and The Ferrars Academy into our Trust family of 7 schools. We value opportunities to talk to school leaders, governors and Trustees about what Pioneer can offer to individual schools or to other Trusts, so please get in touch if you are interested in hearing more.

Pioneer has an outstanding track record of School Improvement across the region. As a CPD delivery partner of Bedford Borough Council, Chiltern Teaching School Hub, UCL and Best Practice Network, we have the expertise to work with ambitious schools and Trusts who want the best provision for their pupils and opportunities for their teams.

With the support of our growing team of experts, we are able to offer brokered services in an extensive range of School Improvement activities and CPD as well as school support services such as safeguarding, finance, recruitment, human resources, catering management, premises compliance and IT.

If you are interested in hearing more about our Trust, come and talk to us.

Mrs Cori Bateman
Chief Executive Officer

A Values Based Trust

Pioneer Learning Trust academies work collaboratively with our shared values. The Trust is focused on collaboration and partnership in the pursuit of excellence and equity for all through our shared vision:

- A curriculum designed specifically for our children
- Collaborative, innovative and reciprocal practice
- Relentless pursuit of excellence for all
- Safe and inclusive learning environment
- Inspiring children to love learning
- Broaden horizons through opportunities
- Maintain each school's unique identity
- An open culture of challenge, support and growth
- Recruit, train and retain high quality staff

Our Schools

Chantry Primary Academy is a three-form entry school in Luton offering nursery provision from age 2 and accommodating over 700 pupils. The school holds the Enhanced Values-based Education quality mark and has a strong values-based culture. Chantry achieves consistently high standards and is highly inclusive, with special provision for children with visual impairment.

Southfield Primary Academy is a two-form entry primary school, with nursery provision, in Luton. Southfield aims to bring learning to life for pupils through a creative curriculum. Staff are committed to ensuring that all pupils develop a love of learning and reflect strong values in all aspects of school life. Southfield has high expectations for all, with outstanding provision for personal development.

Whitefield Primary Academy is a highly inclusive and welcoming two-form entry school in Luton, with a growing nursery provision. At Whitefield children are supported to achieve excellent outcomes at all stages of their primary education. As a values-based school, Whitefield is at the centre of its community, working hard to ensure that everyone feels belonging, as part of the school family.

Ferrars Junior School is a three-form entry junior school in Luton. Ferrars prides itself on having an inclusive, family feel, where everyone is valued for their individuality whilst working together towards a common goal - a love of learning. With high expectations Ferrars aims to cultivate children's intellectual, emotional, social, moral and spiritual development to achieve their full potential.

Lakeview School is a two-form entry primary school, with a nursery, in Wixams, Bedford. Serving over 450 children aged 3-11, the school embodies their motto: ‘Our children are at the heart of our school; Our school is at the heart of our community.' Lakeview is a values-based school, providing enriching learning experiences to foster success and valuing strong partnerships with parents.

Warden Hill Infant Academy is a four-form entry infant school in Luton, educating children from Reception to Year 2. Warden Hill is a friendly, welcoming school where all children are supported to ‘be the best they can be’ through the school's values-based approach. At the heart of the community, the school works closely with Warden Hill Junior School, ensuring a consistent educational journey.

The Ferrars Academy is a multicultural infant and nursery school for 3–7 year olds in Luton, providing excellence in early education, celebrating diversity and nurturing every child’s potential. An inclusive environment and rich curriculum inspires curiosity, confidence, and a love of learning. With a values led 'family' approach ,the school builds strong foundations for lifelong success and happiness.

What are the Benefits of Joining Our Trust?

Strong Pedagogical Practice in a Primary Specialist Trust

Our School Improvement Team have supported a large number of schools to develop their curriculum through our extensive School to School support work. With a Trust wide focus on inclusion and Pupil Premium expenditure, curriculum development and specialist leadership combine to support schools in developing ambitious curriculum provision to benefit all pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND.

Solid Financial Stability with Firm Savings for Schools

Through our central team and central services we have saved each of our schools significant sums (up to 5% of their overall expenditure!) to enable school leaders to target money where it is better spent - on resources and activities for pupil learning. Savings are achieved through:

- Removal of School Improvement Advisory service fees
- Removal of specialist consultancy fees
- Significant reduction to CPD budget
- Significant reduction to recruitment budget
- Removal of legal buy back fees
- Significant savings through in-house school meals provision
- Removal of external finance oversight/support costs
- Shared appointments in finance, IT and premises
- Significant savings on joint procurement

Excellent CPD Provision

Our CEO is highly experienced in school leadership and has extensive knowledge and expertise in School Improvement, having successfully supported multiple schools to secure sustained improvement, evident in pupil outcomes and inspection judgements.

Our large team of Specialist Leaders provide in-house CPD across the Trust on a range of areas. Pioneer Learning Trust has been commissioned to lead the Early Careers Framework as well as facilitating a number of NPQ programmes on behalf of the Chiltern Teaching School Hub, partnering with Best Practice Network.

Commissioned by Enigma Maths Hub as a Mastery Specialist Teacher and Trainer, our Director of Mathematics also leads maths CPD and supports maths leadership across the Trust.

Pioneer is a Lead School for Initial Teacher Training working with Chiltern Training Group (CTG) alongside other providers. Our SLEs also deliver elements of the teacher training lecture programme. The Trust has significant strength in developing teachers and leaders and is well placed to meet any training requirements schools may have.

AUTONOMY with ALIGNMENT

Areas where schools work with aligned practice and commomality across the Trust	• The Pioneer Promise and commitment to our shared vision • Termly Data collection and a common assessment system • Central service compliance functions including finance and premises • Commitment to outreach and School to School support • Reporting structures, e.g. governing body templates and central policies • HR policies, practice and recruitment • Use of Pioneer branding and promotion of the Trust • Appraisal/Performance Management systems
Areas where schools retain agency and may develop individual practices to suit their context	• Day to Day operations • Curriculum Design and Teaching and Learning • Staffing structures within in-year delegated budgets • School branding, website and prospectus • School level policy and practice • School priorities and improvement strategy • Budget setting and management within scheme of delegation • Setting school hours and INSET Days (in partnership with the Trust)

Why Join Our Trust?

We are all about the Children - Pursuing Excellence and Equity

We are a primary focused Trust, specialising in the primary curriculum, pedagogy and practice. Our vision is to provide our pupils with an exceptional quality of inclusive education provision through continuous review of impact and planning for improvement in order to achieve our mission of all pupils having an equal opportunity to achieve a successful future in education and work.

The Pioneer Promise - Opportunities for our Pupils

In the pursuit of excellence and equity our schools all commit to the Pioneer Promise, offering a range of opportunities to enhance children's school experiences, but what *is* the promise we make?

We are absolutely passionate about our pupils developing a love of reading, a passion for maths and a thirst for knowledge of the world around them, but we also want our children's school days to be filled with memories of their friendships and experiences. Our promise is that we will fill our children's school years with opportunities to be inspired and challenged, to experience excitement and adventure, to broaden their horizons, and to learn about people, community and the wider world beyond their classroom.

The Role of the Children's Champion

The Children's Champion works closely with schools and the Central Team to facilitate the delivery of the Pioneer Promise, utilising Pupil Premium funding to enhance the core curriculum for disadvantaged pupils. Forming community links, building relationships with local companies, providers and charities, and applying for grants and bursaries on behalf of schools, the Children's Champion has one key focus - ensuring that all children have the opportunity to live our values through the Pioneer Promise.

All schools in our Trust commit to engaging fully with the Children's Champion and to making best use of available funding to ensure affordability and access arrangements to enable all pupils to participate in these experiences. We believe that through participation in the Pioneer Promise opportunities, our pupils will leave our schools better equipped for the next stage in their education and their future lives.

Quality

Aspiration

Respect

Integrity

Enjoyment

Unity

Independence

"It was great working alongside different children from Whitefield during our school linking project, working in unity to complete different tasks and making new friends along the way."

School's Linking Project pupil

"I couldn't believe we got to travel to London and spread positivity whilst marching with our friends from Whitefield. High-fiving all the members of the public was amazing - we really brought so many smiles to so many people."

Lord Mayor's Show pupil

Trust Partnerships

Trust partnerships are about individual schools and Trusts to coming together in mutually beneficial partnerships for all parties to explore the benefits of a school joining the Trust. Partnership working allows the school to benefit from the collaboration with and opportunities within the Trust before making a firm decision to join. At Pioneer we would encourage any interested school to join our Headteacher Board and to attend Trust Board meetings, in an observer capacity. **Pioneer Learning Trust works in a very transparent way and we are very open to exploring partnership options with schools.**

How might a Trust Partnership Work?

- Trust Partnerships are time-limited and are not a long-term alternative to joining the Trust.
- During the partnership, the governing body of the partner school should take the opportunity to undertake early due diligence and give full consideration to academisation, re-brokering or merging (dependent on the school's circumstances).
- Activities undertaken as part of the partnership would primarily focus on teaching and leadership. Trust partnerships are usually focused on activities such as Trust-wide training opportunities, headteacher mentoring and support, and cross trust benchmarking of data but often include central service support or the purchase of central services.

Central support services

Pioneer Learning Trust has a growing central team who can provide a range of services to suit all schools. Joining schools automatically have access to the services their school needs, whether this is all services or a minimal package - each school is unique and will want to build a package around their own needs. Schools which are not yet ready to join a MAT may still wish to benefit from our services and a **bespoke** package can be designed to meet any school's needs.

Finance Function and Support

Policy and Documentation Support

Human Resources Advice and Support

Premises and Compliance Support

Network Management and IT Support Services

Catering Management Support Service

Job Descriptions and Recruitment

Joint Purchasing and Procurement

Contribution Rate

As a Trust we have worked with governing bodies to set a contribution rate which meets the needs of each school as an individual. Our current contribution rate to support central services is set at 5%. For this, each school is entitled to a high level of support.

The main areas covered by this contribution are as follows:

- Executive Leadership Advocacy and Support
- Comprehensive School Improvement Services
- Financial Support Services, including Software, Monitoring and Audit
- Catering Management, including Line Management, Parent Portal and Menu Development
- Legal Services and Support
- GDPR Support, including Data Protection Officer Responsibility
- Central HR and Recruitment Support Services to complement in-school provision
- Premises Compliance Support Services, including Smartlog Systems
- Governance Support, including Governorhub and Training
- Trust-Wide CPD Support and Services.

School Leadership and Management Support

Raising Attainment

With a long standing track record of raising attainment in our schools and in the schools we work with, we are confident that our School Improvement Services are secure and that the resources we have both within the Trust and with our key school improvement partners will meet your school's needs.

Whether your key issues relate to attainment, leadership, recruitment, professional development of staff or a combination of all of these; Pioneer Learning Trust can support you to improve your school.

Strategy and Support

- Accountable Officer (CEO) – liaison and advocacy with DfE and Local Authority. Strategic MAT oversight, responsible for standards and providing support for schools in all areas
- Director of Education – leading on School Improvement, planning bespoke programmes and approaches to meet schools' needs whilst identifying good practice to share across the Trust.
- Headteacher Board – all schools are represented on this board to influence the strategic direction of the MAT
- School Reviews – a peer monitoring and review process led by senior professionals and partners
- Specialist Leaders – Trust and Partnership schools have access to Specialist Leaders in key areas such as assessment

Leadership and Management

- Partnership with Chiltern Teaching School Hub for Early Careers Framework and Appropriate Body
- Centrally provided CPD and networking to develop the expert subject knowledge of subject leaders, teaching and support staff
- Access to an extensive range of CPD for staff at all levels through partnerships with the Teaching School Hub and other Trusts
- Strategic leader networking, collaborative strategic planning, coaching and support for leaders
- Bespoke governor training

Our Track Record of Success - Tried and Trusted Improvement Expertise

Chantry Primary Academy: Securely good Outcomes consistently well above national

Deployed by Luton LA to Norton Road Primary School to provide intensive support, moving the school from 'rapidly declining' to good in two terms

Southfield Primary Academy: Attendance and Behaviour Hub School. Leading Development Days and supporting schools regionally

Brokered by other local Multi Academy Trusts to support school improvement in their primary schools

Partnership working with The Harpur Trust to establish an ambitious Peer Review Network involving all Bedford Borough Schools

Commissioned by Bedford Borough to lead school improvement programmes and individual school support

Attendance and Behaviour Hub

Southfield Primary Academy is a lead school for the DfE's Attendance and Behaviour Hub programme. Working with other schools and Trusts regionally, Southfield adds capacity to the education landscape. This strength also supports schools within the Trust, working closely with the Trust 's Education Welfare Officer.

Chantry Primary's story

"Chantry is a strongly performing school and was the original Single Academy Trust which went on to form Pioneer Learning Trust. Having joined the school in 2021, I have been proud to work in such a collaborative and supportive Trust community. As a family of schools, the Trust always put the children first and schools work together to ensure that every child receives the best quality provision regardless of which school they attend. At Chantry we are always keen to share the exceptional practice we have developed across the school and are very proud to be a part of the Pioneer Learning Trust Family."

Noshin Hussain
Headteacher, Chantry Primary Academy

Central Support Services

Our team of school improvement specialists can support your school in a range of ways - to design a curriculum to meet your pupils' need, to raise the quality of teaching and learning, to secure higher pupil outcomes, to plan for a stronger financial position, to improve your staff recruitment and retention, to strengthen governance, or to meet any other needs. School improvement support is available to joining schools and can also be brokered to our wider community of schools at a cost suited to your budget.

School Improvement

Strategic Leadership and Governance Support

Cori Bateman
National Leader in Education (NLE)
Pupil Premium Reviews
Governor Training

Jamie Pardon
Director of Education
Leadership Development
CPD
Governor Training

Nichola Comben
Director of Inclusion and Achievement

Hannah Page
Executive Assessment Lead

Jo Lunn
Lead Practitioner for Pupil Opportunity and Community (Children's Champion)

Specialist Leader in Education (SLE) Support

Amy Moye
Teaching and Learning

Jenni Lloyd
Curriculum Development

Carley James
English and Yr 6 Standards

Shaela Malik
Securing Excellence in Yr 6

Coralie Bordiak
SEND/Inclusion

Sarah Kelly
SEND/Inclusion

Jess Elbourne-Holmes
Values-based Education

Hannah Francis
Early Years

Coby Hitchcock
EYFS, Phonics, Early Reading

Michelle Nelis
EYFS, Phonics, Early Reading

Kirsty Armstrong
EYFS, Phonics, Early Reading

Specialist Leader in Education (SLE) Support

Adrian Bee
Maths

Carrie Ann Rayner
English

Lorna Jones
Science (KS1)

Adam Nelson
Education Technology

Linda Godden
Computing

Gemma Hourican
Design Technology

Andrew Sutcliffe
Music

Katherine Green
PE

Jake Gurney
Coaching/Staff Development

Supriya Shrestha
Maths (KS1)

Helen Thinksanger
Lower KS2 Standards

Operational

Finance, IT, Premises and Administrative Support

- **Jon Briggs**
  Chief Finance and Operations Officer
- **Brian Herbert**
  School Business Partner/ Income Generation
- **Sonja Hamilton**
  School Business Partner/ Finance Development
- **Mel Clarke**
  HR Services Manager
- **Maria Priano**
  Recruitment Manager/ Executive Assistant
- **Richard Harvey**
  IT Services Manager
- **Claire Dreyer**
  Catering Services Manager
- **Darren Coates**
  Facilities and Compliance

Pastoral

Pastoral Support

- **Maryum Khan**
  Education Welfare and Safeguarding
- **Dawn Hubbard**
  VIG (Video Interaction Guidance) Accredited Practitioner
- **Natalie Gill**
  Pastoral Support and Community
- **Marie Jennings**
  Attendance, Safeguarding and Pastoral Support
- **Lauren Adams**
  Therapeutic Thinking

Our School Improvement Model

Our School Improvement Strategy is designed with our Trust vision at its heart - to pursue excellence and equity. As a Trust, our pupils remain at the heart of all we do. Our mission is to achieve excellence and equity by providing our pupils with exceptional curriculum provision and world class teaching so that each child has their needs met to achieve success and prepare for their next stage in life.

Our approach to school improvement has been shaped by the concept of strong collaboration and an outward facing approach. Through collaboration, the expertise and talent that exists within the Trust is combined with those in our partner schools to ensure that our schools benefit from robust and objective reflection of practice.

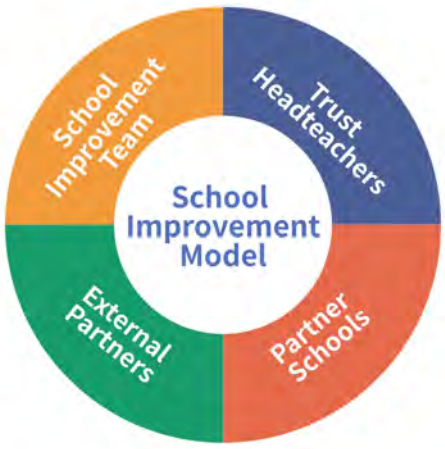
We know that there is exceptional practice in each school but that schools will be at a different stages on their improvement journey. We also recognise schools can be impacted by a number of factors that can impact this journey along the way. Our school improvement approach will remain evidence-informed, responsive and proportionate to a school's improvement needs over time. This approach allows the Trust to build and strengthen our capacity to support more schools as we grow.

Our School Improvement Strategy has been developed in consultation and engagement with the Headteacher Board, made up of Trust schools' Headteachers working alongside Headteachers of our non-MAT partner schools. This group takes an open and reflective approach to reviewing and refreshing our school improvement approach and 'sense checking' with external partners.

School Improvement Team

Our School Improvement Team is made up of the CEO (previously a National Leader in Education), supported by the Director of Education (an experienced Headteacher) and the Lead Practitioner for Pupil Opportunity and Community (Children's Champion), working closely with a strong team of Specialist Leaders of education (SLEs), including the Trust's Assessment Lead and school based subject leaders.

The School Improvement Team draws on the expertise of specialists from all of our Trust and partner schools to ensure that we seek opportunities to maximise professional growth of our colleagues, whilst deploying those with the highest level of skill and knowledge to support schools in their journey. This ensures a comprehensive approach to achieving the best possible outcomes. Working together in this collaborative way we ensure continuous improvement across all schools.



A Tailored Approach with Equity at its Heart

We recognise that each school's needs are different and that these needs change over time. Schools will have relative strengths as well as areas for development, so it is essential that our School Improvement Strategy does not adopt a 'one word judgement' approach. School improvement work is tailored to meet individual schools' needs and to be agile to those needs changing over time. One size does not fit all, time and resource allocation is driven by need and will vary from school to school.

We recognise that schools improve schools and believe in a school led system. Every school in our Trust has significant expertise in specific areas of practice. We aim to maximise the potential of our shared resources through deployment of our schools' experts, when schools are in the position of having capacity to support others. This develops our leaders at all levels and supports the principle of equity - schools provide their expertise and time generously and utilise time and resource only when they need it.

Our School Improvement Team have developed robust and comprehensive programmes to support subject leaders and school leaders at all levels. In conjunction with Headteachers, the team develop comprehensive and bespoke CPD for all school staff, tailored to schools' needs; alongside bespoke mentoring, coaching and support for teams and individual staff, as required. The School Improvement Team are a highly skilled resource available to schools to deploy in schools to support them in securing positive outcomes for pupils.

Mutual Expectations

Schools retain full autonomy and accountability for their curriculum and the teaching and learning approaches they adopt. The School Improvement Team will work with school leaders to evaluate the impact of teaching and learning to ensure that pupils are securing successful outcomes. It is essential that schools engage openly and positively with our School Improvement Strategy and the opportunities this provides to schools to support them in their individual improvement journeys.

Working with transparency and integrity, the School Improvement Team will be open and honest with schools to ensure that improvement work is focused in the right areas. In return it is essential that the information shared by schools is accurate and objective. It is essential that any concerns are discussed at the earliest opportunity in order to consider and plan appropriate support or corrective actions.

School Review Processes

As a Trust, we engage with local schools outside of the Trust to ensure that we are outward facing and to ensure an objective perspective of our schools' performance. This group of school leaders form peer groups to lead a cycle of termly reviews of our schools and the schools in the group.

In order to secure a completely objective, external perspective on our schools' performance, the Trust engages the services of an external consultant with inspection experience. This consultant works alongside the School Improvement Team in conducting a thorough review of each Trust school in order to identify key strengths of the school and areas for further improvement. These reviews are developmental and provide school leaders with guidance and advice to support the next steps in their improvement journey.

Peer Led School Reviews

Each school in the Trust will have a termly Peer Led School Review. Schools discuss the focus of these reviews with the School Improvement Team in order to ensure that the school has identified the best area of focus to secure progress towards the school's previously identified aims.

The Headteacher Board work together to identify a review team of appropriately experienced and skilled school leaders in order to secure the highest possible level of expertise related to the area of focus for each review. A member of the School Improvement Team will attend each of our Trust schools' reviews and will support by being a member of the review team in other reviews when capacity allows.

Consultant Led School Reviews

Consultant led reviews take place in each Trust school twice a year. These reviews are led by the consultant brokered by the Trust to work alongside the School Improvement Team, forming a review team. The school's leadership team are fully involved in identifying focus areas and participate fully in the review.

These reviews tend to have a wider focus of multiple subject areas or focus areas across the school. This is to secure the best value from the review. These reviews provide a summative, as well as a formative evaluation of each school, together with next steps for further development.

These reviews can be helpful for schools in identifying gaps prior to an inspection, however these reviews are not designed to mirror or reflect the inspection process and are not intended to be a mock inspection.

Reporting Structures

Headteacher Reports to Governors

Headteachers produce a written report to their school's local governing bodies in the second half of each term. This aligns with the assessment schedule, ensuring that all pupil data presented to governors is as accurate and up to date as possible. School monitoring information informs governors of progress towards the full implementation of school improvement plans, allowing informed evaluation of progress being made by the school.

CEO and Director of Education Reports to Trustees

Reporting to Trustees is through written reports produced by the CEO, CFO and Director of Education and presented to Trustees each half term. Information is drawn from ongoing work being carried out in schools, along with any intelligence from School Reviews and any issues or information raised by Headteachers. A Risk Matrix is also completed for each school, agreed with Headteachers prior to each meeting.

School level data is shared regularly with Trustees, along with the actions being taken by schools to secure strong outcomes for pupils. Headteachers' reports to governors are also used by the School Improvement Team to inform Trustees of progress being made in each school in relation to their school improvement priority areas

MAT Heads Meetings

Headteachers across the MAT meet fortnightly to discuss collaborative work and to share initiatives, best practice and to discuss and troubleshoot any issues collaboratively. These meetings serve as an opportunity to utilise the strengths in our schools to develop areas for improvement in others.

CEO and Headteacher Meetings

The CEO meets regularly with each Headteacher to ensure clear lines of communication and to discuss all aspects of the School Improvement Process. The CEO's role is key in brokering the support and guidance each school requires to move forward on its journey of continuous improvement.

Celebrating and Learning From Best Practice

A key element in our approach to School Improvement is that of celebrating success and sharing strengths from across schools, to support one another. Data analysis is used to highlight areas of progress which can then be explored to identify successful strategies to be disseminated across schools. Similarly best practice identified in school reviews is celebrated and shared across all schools. In this way we can ensure that our collaborative Trust continually improves the provision for pupils and the outcomes our pupils achieve.

Bespoke Packages to Meet Individual Schools' Needs

Pioneer are currently working with a number of schools in Luton and Bedford Borough, providing bespoke packages based around the schools' unique needs. These services are brokered through Service Level Agreements or Trust Partnerships. Each of these services is available to Trust schools free, within the contribution rate.

Headteacher Performance Management

Supporting/advising the governing body in meeting their statutory duty to manage the performance of their Headteacher.

Effective management of the Headteacher's performance will support a focus on continuous professional development and school improvement within the school's culture. Services include:

- Annual review/target setting
- Review/target setting + review cycle with Headteacher

School Improvement Advisory Service

Working with the school's strategic leaders and governors to evaluate strengths and identify development areas in the school.

An effective school improvement system will ensure that school leaders know what is working well and why and what needs to improve. Examples of School Improvement activities include:

- Reviewing key documents - SEF and SIP
- Regular School Improvement visits including review of key documents
- Regular School Reviews for example subject reviews, SEND, Pupil Premium etc.

Leadership and Governance Training

Governor training is an essential element in ensuring that school leaders are effectively challenged and supported. Training is fully bespoke covering all topics from 'Statutory Duties' to specifics, such as 'asking challenging questions.'

Leadership training is designed with the Headteacher in order to meet the school's specific needs, for example, Leading and Developing a Team, Leadership Behaviours, Servant Leadership and Values-based Leadership. Training is organised to meet the school's needs but examples include:

- Twilight sessions
- Half Day or Whole Day facilitated workshops or training

Inspection Preparation/Post Inspection Support

Schools who have effectively prepared their subject leaders and other key staff have found that inspection can a supportive process validating the work schools are doing.

This work can take many forms - from working with subject leaders to review their area; triangulating curriculum documents with classroom practice and pupil outcomes, to rehearsing the 90 minute call. Examples of inspection related activities may include:

- School Reviews - whole school, single subjects, SEND, Pupil Premium
- Rehearsal of pre-inspection call and leadership discussions

Thinking About Joining? Next Steps

The Decision Making Journey

When a Governing Body begins to consider the possibility of joining a Multi Academy Trust, there are several steps which support the formal decision making process:

Governors explore the local landscape of MATs and consider what they have to offer schools
Governors and the Headteacher invite Trust Leaders to meet and to discuss their Trust offer
Governors identify alignment with a Trust based on their school's needs
Collaboration and partnership opportunities are identified
The school begins to work with the Trust informally, for example by joining the Headteacher Board and participating activities such as the school review system
Governors engage with the Trust Board to better understand the workings of the Trust
Ongoing discussions about the partnership with the Trust informs the Governors' decision
Governors agree that the MAT is a good match and move to a formal decision

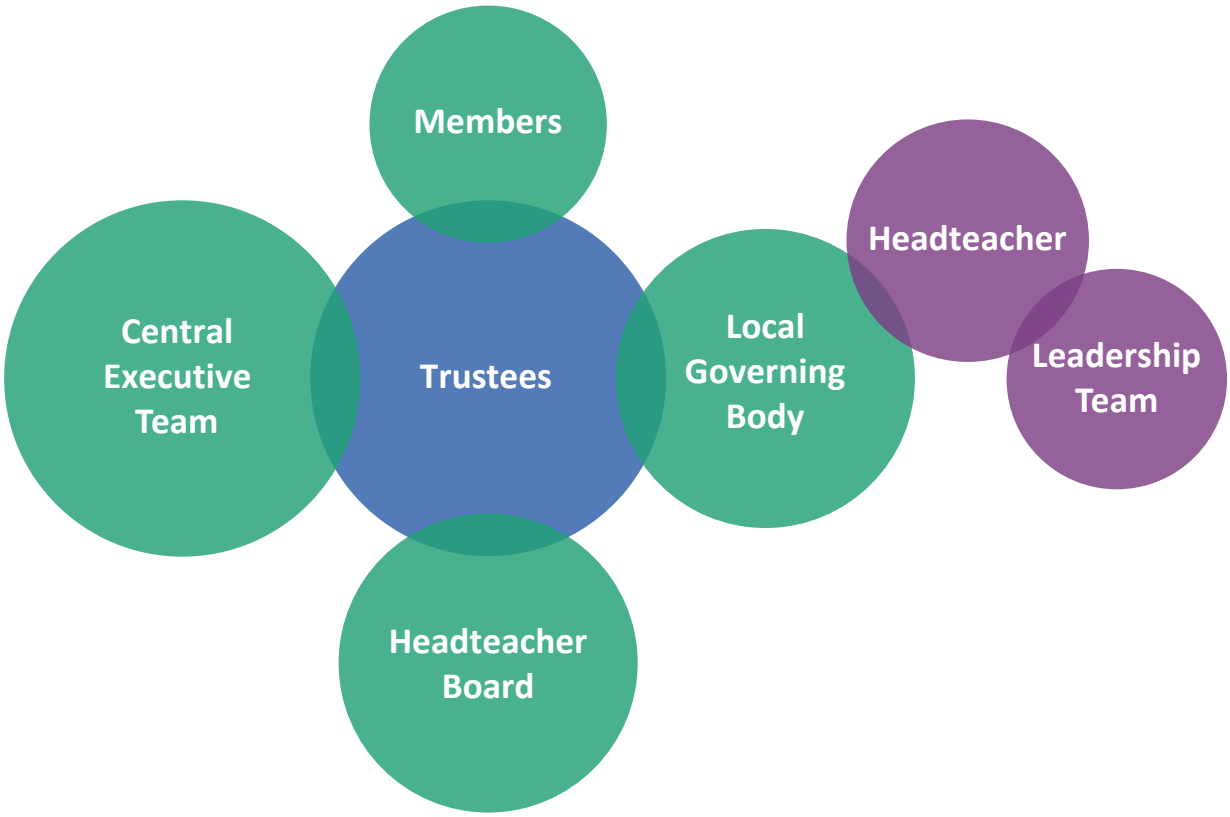
Joining the Trust

Once a school has made the decision that joining Pioneer Learning Trust is the right decision for their school a number of steps must be followed:

The Governing body formally agree to join Pioneer and formally submit an expression of interest to the DfE
Trust Board considers the application to agree approval of further discussions with the applicant school and to begin the due diligence process
Due diligence undertaken and clarifications sought
Trust Board formally approve the school's application
Application made to the Regional Schools Commissioner to join Pioneer
Regional Schools Commissioner issues approval
Information gathering undertaken to instruct solicitors
School consults with stakeholders for 6 weeks followed by a 4 week TUPE consultation with staff and unions led by the school's HR provider
Legal agreements completed including land transfer, leases, funding agreements and commercial transfers
DFE approval of transfer of the school to the Trust

Governance Structure in the Trust

Our governance structure consists of the Members, Trust Board, Finance Committee, Headteacher Board and Local Governing Bodies. Together, these different elements of the governance structure provide oversight, challenge and support for schools.



Members

The Members are the guardians of the Academy Trust, with the ability to appoint some of the Trustees and the right to amend the Trust's Articles of Association. Members play a limited but crucial role in safeguarding Academy Trust governance. Members should assure themselves that the governance of the Trust is effective, that Academy Trustees are acting in accordance with the Trust's charitable objectives and use their powers to step in if governance is failing.

Trust Board

The Trust Board is made up of Non-Executive Directors (Trustees). In Pioneer, the Trust Board includes representation from schools' Local Governing Bodies along with additional Trustees as appointed by the Members. The Trustees are responsible for setting the direction of the Trust, holding schools to account and ensuring financial probity. Academy Trusts are charitable companies. The Trustees are company directors and must comply with company law requirements.

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee work with the Chief Finance and Operations Officer to ensure that the finances of the Trust are managed effectively and responsibly so that schools within the Trust have the resources necessary to provide high quality learning to all pupils. The committee is made up of Trustees with financial expertise, seeking advice and information from the Trust's Internal Scrutiny providers and, where appropriate, the schools' auditors.

Headteacher Board

The Headteacher Board is made up of the Headteachers of all schools within the Trust along with invited Headteachers of potential joining schools. The Headteacher Board provides information and support to the Trust Board on matters relating to the provision of school improvement, high quality education, standards and outcomes.

Local Governing Bodies

Each school within the Trust retains a Local Governing body made up of Community Governors, Parent Governors and Staff Governors. Working within a Scheme of Delegation, Local Governing Bodies retain much of the strategic accountability for the school they represent, including finance, curriculum and staffing. Our Local Governing Bodies work in a similar way to a Governing Body of a maintained school.

"I began as Chair of Governors at Whitefield and have been Chair of the Trust since it was formed. I admire the approach Cori and the Trust Strategic Team take when collaborating with a school; each school keeps its own identity, but benefits from the support and governance provided by the central function and team.

Following the progress and growth of the Trust, and seeing the schools collaborate to raise attainment, has made me realise the benefits of being part of a Trust. I have seen the progression in each school, and how the work of the Trust has not only benefited the pupils, but also members of staff too, enabling them to learn new skills and challenge themselves."

Melissa Trodd
Trust Chair

Growing The Trust

Why do we want Pioneer to grow further?

Our ideal size is 3000-5000 pupils. This would ensure that our family of schools benefits from the financial security of capital funding and collective buying power, whilst remaining small enough to ensure that every school has a clear voice. In addition, a larger family of schools means more opportunities to collaborate and learn from one another.

Each of our schools already benefit from our strong central support team. With further growth in the Trust, Trustees will be able to grow this team to provide support to schools in a wider range of areas.

Catering Management Services

All of our schools have ‘in-house’ catering services, giving schools greater control over this area as well as saving money and providing additional benefits to the schools. We also offer a Catering Management service to schools outside of the Trust as a Traded Service. We currently provide this service to schools outside of the Trust.

School Condition Allocation (SCA)

All schools receive capital funding to support them with their capital programmes, however this can be a 'drop in the ocean' for individual schools. When a Multi-Academy Trust reaches 3000 pupils, significant government funding is granted directly to the Trust for capital projects to develop schools' facilities in a planned and coherent way.

Improved Buildings = Improved Facilities

As a Trust we have successfully secured significant funding to upgrade our estates through the Conditions Improvement Funding programme, however, with SCA funding we would be in a stronger position to plan strategically for estates development, knowing that the funding is secure. This would enable us to:

- Upgrade IT systems and devices to meet priorities in the Digital Strategy
- Develop further provision for SEND pupils
- Install additional security measures in schools
- Improve heating systems and roofing
- Provide external facilities such as MUGAs
- Build additional spaces such as specialist rooms or libraries
- Plan for further sustainability solutions such as solar

Economies of Scale

The bigger the organisation, the bigger the economies of Scale that can be achieved.

Schools in the Trust currently benefit from significant discounts through bulk or group purchasing. On forming the Trust and combining our purchasing power, each school has saved thousands of pounds within their revenue budgets in addition to securing major works through the CIF bid process. The greater the number of schools in the Trust, the greater our buying power.

Initial Teacher Training

As a lead school working closely with Chiltern Training Group and other training providers, our Trust provides Initial Teacher Training opportunities, ensuring that we can 'grow our own' staff by training teachers from within and outside our school communities.

Early Careers Framework

Pioneer Learning Trust is the delivery partner for Chiltern Teaching School Hub for ECTs in the primary phase. Pioneer's team of Specialist Leaders deliver the ECTE programme locally in Partnership with CTSH and UCL.

Developing and Retaining People

Through excellent CPD we are able to grow the expertise of our teams. In a larger MAT there will be greater scope to provide broader career options and to retain the best staff within our overall organisation.

Support staff also benefit from opportunities to work with other schools and even to work in other schools if they wish to do so. Career progression is more widely available at all staff levels within a larger organisation. We have seen multiple examples of staff who have secured progression and promotion within the Trust.

What Our Community Says

"As Director of Education and Deputy CEO, I have enjoyed building on the collaborative work of the Trust, developing teachers as leaders within each school. The partnerships Pioneer has developed with local school improvement partners are invaluable, securing high quality CPD to develop our staff teams and improve our schools in our pursuit of excellence and equity."

Jamie Pardon
Director of Education

"Having originally joined Chantry as a newly qualified teacher, I benefited from exceptional support and professional development through the work of the Trust. I have accessed great CPD and have had the opportunity to facilitate the ECF and ITT lecturing, leading to me undertake the NPQ for Leading Teacher Development. I have recently been appointed Associate Assistant Headteacher and work collaboratively with the leadership team to fulfil my role effectively. The Trust's values are lived by our schools and teams - it's a great place to work."

Jake Gurney
Associate Assistant Headteacher, Chantry Primary Academy

"Having been an Assistant Headteacher when Southfield joined the Trust, I have seen Southfield improve enormously as a result of the collaborative approach of the Trust. Since becoming Headteacher in September 2022, I have found the support working within the Trust family invaluable, particularly the close partnership with the Central Team and the support of the other Headteachers in the Trust. The strength of this support was felt during our last inspection where we achieved outstanding for Personal Development. This judgement reflects both the exceptional work of the school and the enhancement activities offered through the Pioneer Promise. The future is exciting for Southfield and Pioneer."

Sarah Baldwin
Headteacher, Southfield Primary Academy

“I really enjoyed the schools linking project because I made some new friends. I learned that it doesn’t matter which school you go to, our values help us to get along with each other like in a team. The other thing I really loved was going to see the Lion King in London, it was awesome.

Pupil

“My daughter has been on a few trips with staff and pupils from the other schools. It is brilliant that children get the chance to go places like the theatre and to go out into the community to help others, like the collection drives for the Foodbank. She has also made new friends from the other schools.”

Parent

“When we joined the Trust I thought things would change in school but what I didn’t realise was how it would change for the better. Our pupils have so many more opportunities now and it’s great for staff too. My son attends the after school club provision, he loves it there, it saves me money and the team in there are brilliant!”

Support staff member

We hope that you have found the information in this brochure useful. Should you wish to explore any aspect of our work or our offer in more detail, please do not hesitate to get in touch. We work with both maintained schools and Academies to provide school improvement support on a brokered basis and will consider any deployment requests. We are keen to grow our Trust and so would welcome the opportunity to discuss the benefits for schools of joining us at Pioneer Learning Trust.

PIONEER LEARNING TRUST

Pursuing Excellence and Equity

For more information about the Trust, or to find out how you can join, please get in touch:

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Pioneer Learning Trust

Let's work together to make a real difference for your pupils

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