

# WISE Academies Trust

## Business Plan

### 2016-2019



WISE  
ACADEMIES  
We Inspire Success and Excellence

# Contents

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A Message from Robert Symonds, Chair of WISE Academies Trust	3
Introduction	4
Executive Summary	5
A Trust with a National Reputation	6
Mission Statement	7
Our Structure	8
Our Strategic Aims	9
Key Performance Indicators	10

## Message from the Chair

I am proud to have been associated with WISE Academies from its inception and am even more delighted to observe the progress of the Trust over the intervening years.



The WISE Academies vision is 'We Inspire Success and Excellence' and our clear stated ethos is to provide a high quality educational experience in a safe, creative and exciting learning environment. We set high expectations for our pupils and for our staff.

WISE Academies must constantly evolve to deliver the best possible provision in our communities. We are an outward looking organisation and must always be ready to innovate. In the same way, we want others to recognise our brand 'WISE Academies' as a provider of excellent services.

We have worked hard to engender a sense of belonging. Whether a pupil, employee or someone involved in the governance of our academies, you are part of our family of schools. Like all families we want the best but we are also there to support each other when things get tough. We have proved time and again that this works to all our advantages.

Each school has its own identity and each one makes its own valuable contribution to the organisation as a whole.

I am justifiably proud of the WISE team. Every time that we make an appointment, whether it is for a headteacher, a member of the support staff or for a teacher, we will always appoint people of vision who can demonstrate the commitment to the WISE Academies ethos of the highest expectations.

We truly value the contribution that our employees and those responsible for governance make to our success. We will continue to attract the best quality candidates to our organisation - we want WISE Academies to be the employer of choice.

I am in no doubt that leadership is the key driver of our future success and this is reflected throughout this Business Plan which clearly sets out the strategy for taking WISE Academies into an even brighter future. However, every one of us adds their own dimension to the WISE vision and through positive partnership we will all benefit from this.

Bob Symonds, NLG  
Chair of Directors

## Introduction



Welcome to the 2016-2019 Business Plan for WISE Academies Trust.

The Trust's Object, as outlined in its Articles of Association, is specifically restricted to the following: to advance for the public benefit education in the United Kingdom, by establishing, maintaining, carrying on, managing and developing academies that offer a broad and balanced curriculum.

WISE Academies is now in its fifth year of operation and has achieved a great deal since its inauguration. The Trust was founded on a strong moral purpose to support others, so that young people are enabled to achieve their very best. The Trust has developed significantly in many areas of operation since 2011 but the Object remains our key focus and our success should always be measured against the positive impact we have had on the life of every pupil.

Many of the academies in the Trust serve pupils from highly deprived communities. The significant challenge that this brings should not be underestimated, however, WISE Academies does not accept deprivation as an excuse for low aspiration. The drive for high standards is embodied by the improvement in attainment and progress that has been seen in all of our academies.

An outstanding Trust needs an outstanding workforce and this is central to our success. We will continue to invest in our staff, identify and promote talent and use the skills of individuals to make us stronger.

We have achieved a great deal so far but are ready to go further. Through ongoing self-analysis, review and learning from others, we strive to be one of the best Trust's in the country and be renowned for excellent practice across all directorates.

A period of consolidation has ensured that robust systems, structure and procedures underpin all areas of Trust work. We are now ready, once again, to expand the Trust by inviting new partners to join us so that we work together to deliver excellence for our pupils.

This Business Plan provides a clear strategic direction for the coming years, which will enable the Trust to fulfill its mission of 'Inspiring Success and Excellence'.

Zoe Carr, NLE  
Chief Executive

## Executive Summary

WISE Academies is a growing, successful multi-academy trust based in North-East England. The Trust was established in March 2011 when two Sunderland based primary schools, Bexhill and Town End, converted to form a multi-academy trust (MAT), being invited to do so by the Department for Education as highly successful schools. This was the start of one of the first MATs in the area, formed to embrace the greater freedoms afforded by the academies' agenda.

Since then, in 2012, Hasting Hill and Welbeck have joined the MAT as sponsored academies. These were schools that were seriously under-performing and became part of the Trust to benefit from the shared expertise, vision, resources and partnership that the Trust offers.

The impact of the MAT is best demonstrated in the improvement that has been made in its sponsored academies. Both of these were failing schools before academy conversion took place and served communities based in some of the most deprived wards in the country. Within two years both schools were rated good by Ofsted, with outcomes rising rapidly.

After 2012, the Trust paused its growth in order to build leadership capacity and ensure highly effective systems and structures underpinned all areas of its work. A head office team was gradually established in order to allow academy headteachers to focus relentlessly on improving outcomes for pupils while the functions of finance, governance, health and safety, HR and IT were taken care of by highly skilled experts.

By 2015 the Trust was experiencing great success with three out of four of its academies achieving their highest ever results. A national reputation for excellence was developed and acknowledged by both Nicky Morgan, the former Secretary of State, in her address at the Academies Show in April 2016 and Lord Nash in his address to the House of Lords in October 2015.

The Trust is now in a strong position to grow. There are already many MATs in existence, with more being established going forward. Some are large national trusts whilst some others are just starting out on their journey. However, few MATs will have the same level of experience, the established systems and the successful track record of WISE Academies.

Soon Adderlane First School in Northumberland will join the WISE family of schools and a further school in the same area wishes to become part of the Trust.

In the coming years we hope more schools will join the WISE family so collectively we can grow in strength. The Trust is well placed to support schools in the process of becoming academies by joining our Trust. This long experience of the academy sector means that we can make the transition to academy status as smooth as possible and offer support every step of the way.

## A Trust with a National Reputation

WISE has worked hard to deliver real positive change in the underperforming schools that have joined the Trust whilst also striving for improvement in its founder schools. We are delighted that this has earned the Trust some high profile recognition. Here are some examples: -

“Now look at chains like WISE Academies Trust in Sunderland. It was established by two converter primaries in 2011 and became a sponsor in 2012. It now comprises a number of schools in the North East operating in areas of high deprivation but refusing to accept disadvantage as an excuse for low aspiration. The Trust focuses on changing mind sets, core skills and a constant approach to assessment for learning in every classroom. And in two of its sponsored schools it has seen huge jumps, as much as 25% in the percentage of students achieving Level 4 in reading, writing and maths, with one school achieving 77% and another 91%. It's no wonder that WISE stands for 'We Inspire Success and Excellence'.”

Rt. Hon. Nicky Morgan Secretary of State for Education April 2016 - The Academies' Show

“I am writing to congratulate you, your staff and your pupils for the progress your children are making. Your school's results, as published on 10 December, show that you are amongst the 100 top performing schools in terms of the progress your pupils make between key stage 1 and the end of key stage 2. We want to ensure that every child progresses to the very best of their ability in reading, writing and mathematics so that they have the fluency in these subjects to enable them to succeed at secondary school and beyond. Your school is clearly putting great effort into achieving this. Thank you for your work in continuing the drive towards high standards of educational achievement, and congratulations again to you and your staff for your hard work and professionalism.”

Nick Gibb MP Letter to Hasting Hill Academy, December 2015

“Brilliant sponsors are transforming schools up and down the country – sponsors like WISE Academies Trust in Sunderland. The trust was formed four years ago by two strong primary schools. Two failing primary schools quickly followed and the Trust is seeing huge success. Both previously struggling schools are now judged Good by Ofsted and exam results have shot up. In the year before it became an academy just 53% of children at Hasting Hill Academy achieved the expected level in their Key Stage 2 tests. This year the trust reports that 91% of pupils met the level 4 standard.”

Lord Nash Parliamentary Under Secretary of State October 2015

# Mission Statement

WE are a family of schools who exist to **INSPIRE** each pupil to believe in themselves so they experience great **SUCCESS** through our commitment to **EXCELLENCE**. Our philosophy is one of boundless aspiration...the sky is the limit!

## Our Commitment

We are a team of staff who, together, all commit to achieving our mission. Because our mission is our collective responsibility, we will work collaboratively to support any part of our family who needs help and be quick to celebrate each other's successes.

## For WISE Pupils...

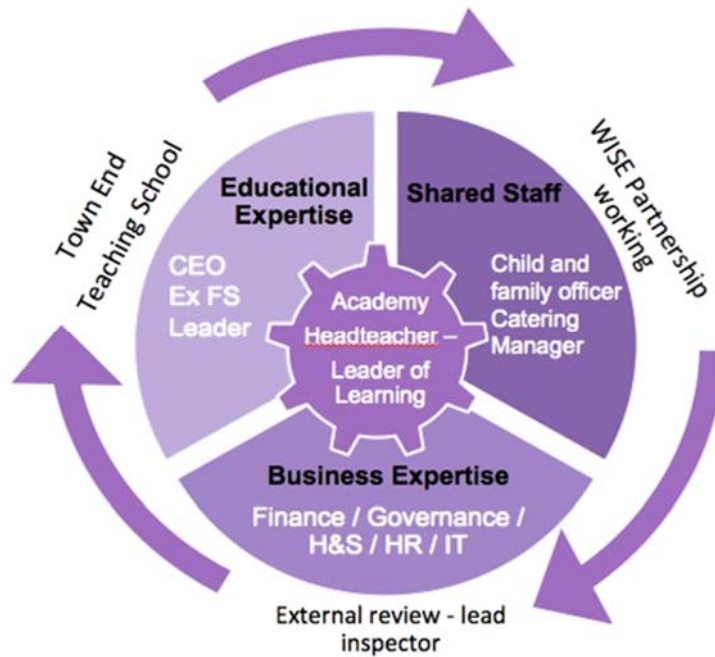
- We foster a love of learning and strive for all pupils to be happy and contented.
- We set the highest possible standards for each pupil and work tirelessly to support each child to achieve their full potential.
- We understand and value each pupil, recognising their unique potential and promoting their individual talents so that they achieve success in many different ways.
- We support the well-being of every pupil so they grow as well-rounded, responsible individuals.
- We ensure that every pupil is proficient in reading, writing and mathematics and have a strong foundation on which to build future learning.
- We ensure that pupils have broadened horizons through providing them with a rich and varied curriculum so that they know the possibilities that are open to them in later life.
- We give pupils memorable childhood experiences, which will stay with them for the rest of their lives.
- We equip each pupil with the skills they need to live in an ever-evolving, technological world.
- We provide learning environments that adhere to the highest standards of safety; that are clean, organised and stimulating.

## As a WISE Team...

- We act with honesty, integrity and fairness in everything we do.
- We have positive, can do attitudes and be 100% committed to every pupil.
- We all carry out our roles to the highest of standards, with attention to detail.
- We act as role models to our pupils demonstrating excellence in all we do.
- We act with a sense of urgency to address any areas that do not contribute positively to the achievement of our mission.
- We value the contribution of each part of the team.
- We invest in our team in order to support their development and equip them to achieve excellence.
- We commit to on-going self-evaluation to drive us forward.
- We hold each other accountable to the achievement of our mission.

## For the WISE Community...

- We treat all stakeholders with understanding and respect and always listen to feedback in order to help us to continually improve.
- We seek to be at the heart of our communities, liaising with families, local services and business for the good of our pupils.
- We be outward facing and seek to find excellence through external partnerships in order to support us in achieving our mission.



The vision of WISE Academies is that headteachers, with the support and challenge of their Local Governing Body, are 'leaders of learning', freed to focus on the core purpose of the job - achieving the best possible outcomes for pupils and ensuring high quality teaching across the academy. Other essential areas are taken care of by a highly skilled Head Office team, each talented and qualified in their own specific area of expertise.

The idea of partnership is important to us and is central to the success of our MAT. We know that we can learn from each other's successes. The way we work means that we can use the talent that exists within our organisation in a creative way to allow all of our academies to achieve their full potential.

Senior leaders within WISE Academies work together to develop practical and effective strategies to transform learning across our academies. We recognise the importance of this in developing the role of leadership and leading learning across the whole Trust.

A key benefit of the multi-academy trust is that staff can quality assure the work of others. Staff working together across the Trust provides parity in judgments and professional development for those involved. WISE Academies also value external school review and working more widely with schools outside of the Trust to ensure that all academies continue to learn from outstanding practice elsewhere in the sector and maintain positive working relationships with other local schools.

WISE has well-established and successful support services. The principle behind the provision of our central team is to ensure that our academies enjoy access to efficient and responsive services which accurately meet the needs of those within the Trust. It is clear that, alongside the freedoms to innovate that are afforded to an Academy Trust, there also comes a higher level of legal and financial accountability. WISE Academies has put in place a framework to ensure compliance with these expectations and this is supported by a nucleus of central support services including Finance, Health & Safety and Governance. Other functions performed centrally are the WISE Catering Provision, HR administration and IT support.

External oversight, both support and challenge, is provided by the CEO, to ensure that progress is rapid and sustained in all academies.



## Our strategic aims

- 1) Provide an excellent standard of education for all pupils.
- 2) Ensure that Spiritual, Moral, Social, Cultural education underpins all activity, so pupils develop as well-rounded, responsible individuals.
- 3) Deliver robust financial management, which informs the strategic development of the Trust.
- 4) Ensure governance is highly effective and fit for purpose.
- 5) Develop a highly-skilled workforce who are ready to support the growth of the Trust.
- 6) Determine Trust consistent operating systems for teaching and learning.
- 7) Improve the Trust estate to ensure it is of consistent high quality and fit for 21<sup>st</sup> century education.
- 8) Grow through the establishment of regional hubs.
- 9) Support the wider school-to-school led system beyond the Trust.
- 10) Ensure the Trust has a regional and national reputation for excellence.

# Key performance indicators

## 1) Providing an excellent standard of education for all pupils.

- All academies are rated as at least good by OFSTED.
- Teaching is 100% good or better.
- Average Trust KS2 outcomes at the expected standard are above the national average in reading, writing, mathematics and spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Value added progress measures from KS1 to KS2 for reading, writing and mathematics are in the top 25% of schools.
- Pupils eligible for pupil premium make progress at least as good as non-pupil premium pupils.

## 2) Ensure that Spiritual, Moral, Social, Cultural education underpins all activity, so pupils develop as well-rounded, responsible individuals.

- Pupil attendance is above the median trend line for school's FSM level.
- Trust persistent absence to be below national average in all academies.
- Pupils enjoy school as demonstrated by an over 85% positive response on pupil questionnaires.
- Parents are satisfied with the quality of education provided demonstrated by an over 85% positive response on questionnaires.

## 3) Deliver robust financial management, which informs the strategic development of the Trust.

- The Trust remains a going concern.
- Reserves policy is maintained to ensure all liabilities can be met.
- External audit reports identify no issues.
- Internal assurance reports are rated satisfactory or above.
- Positive cash flows are maintained at all times.

## 4) Ensure governance is highly effective and fit for purpose.

- Compliance systems give assurance to the Board of Directors that the Trust is meeting its statutory and legal responsibilities.
- Governors at all levels have an appropriate skill set in order to fulfill their governance role as demonstrated by annual self-evaluation.
- The scheme of delegation is published on the Trust website and it clearly identifies the role of all those responsible for governance.

## 5) Develop a highly-skilled workforce who support the growth of the Trust.

- A clear WISE offer of CPD for staff is available to enable talent development.
- Talent spotting programme in place with fast-track opportunities to develop leadership skills.
- Staff talent inventory utilised to ensure effective school-to-school support.
- Accreditation of more leaders of education, LA moderators and trained OFSTED inspectors.

## 6) Determine Trust consistent operating systems for teaching and learning.

- Trust pedagogical model created which allows for individuality and creativity.
- Best practice frameworks developed to support core Trust teaching and learning approaches through establishment of outstanding teacher working parties.
- Innovative practice and evidence-based research utilised to refine and enhance consistent operating systems.

## 7) Improve the Trust estate to ensure it is of consistently high quality and fit for 21<sup>st</sup> century education.

- 3-year estate development plan identifies key priorities for estate improvement and capital investment
- All academy sites are compliant, safe, and maintained to a high standard.
- Trust online platform utilised effectively for managing all aspects of statutory compliance.

## 8) Grow through the establishment of regional hubs.

- A clear growth plan ensures expansion is manageable and does not jeopardise existing Trust academies.
- 3 Trust hubs are created in North-East region.
- Trust accountability structures created to ensure effective hub oversight.
- Central services are effective in delivering efficient, high quality support to each hub.

## 9) Support the wider school-to-school led system beyond the Trust.

- Town End Teaching School remains sustainable and is utilised to provide a wide range of quality services to others as evidenced through peer review.
- Trust has more staff who are accredited as system leaders who are deployed to support the wider system as well as Trust improvement.

## 10) Ensure the Trust has a regional and national reputation for excellence.

- Trust staff are asked to engage in local and national events to inform decision-making, which promotes the work of the Trust.
- All employees are Trust advocates as demonstrated through staff questionnaires.
- All Trust websites are statutory compliant and up-to-date.