

Strategic Plan

2023 - 2026

***Stronger together in pursuit of excellence
Collaboration, Aspiration, Transformation***



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Background

ROBUS Multi Academy Trust

ROBUS MAT was formed in September 2014. It came into fruition as a natural development of positive relationships built between neighbouring schools in the local area. We continue to work in partnership with all schools and academies in the locality. We believe that collaboration is the key to a successful education system.

ROBUS is Latin for 'strength in togetherness' and this underpins our philosophy. All academies within the ROBUS MAT have the commitment to share their ideas, their expertise and their unique experiences, so that pupils and staff can learn, develop and grow together. We take collective responsibility for our pupils; pooling our energy to find solutions to problems that arise and removing barriers that may prevent success.



Kingston Primary School

Kingston Primary School is a 1-form entry Academy in Benfleet. Ofsted judged it to be an 'Outstanding' Academy when inspected in 2009. It is a National Support School and in 2015 was granted Teaching School status.

'At Kingston we believe that every single child has the right to an exceptional education that provides them with the opportunities to flourish and reach their potential.'



Montgomerie Primary School

Montgomerie Primary School is a 1-form entry Academy in Benfleet. Ofsted judged it to be a 'Good' Academy when inspected in 2023.

'At Montgomerie we aim to engender a real love of life-long learning. We strive to create a positive and caring environment in which everyone is encouraged to develop and reach their full potential.'



Thundersley Primary School

Thundersley Primary School is a 2-form entry Academy in Thundersley. Ofsted judged it to be a 'Good' Academy when inspected in 2023.

'At Thundersley we aim to create aspirational, resilient, lifelong learners who are curious about the wider world and ready for life in an ever changing society'



Woodham Ley Primary School

Woodham Ley Primary is a 1-form entry Academy in Benfleet. It was judged to be 'Good' by Ofsted when inspected in 2023.

'At Woodham Ley, our commitment is to develop unique and ambitious pupils who make informed choices and are inspired to reach their greatest potential'

Introduction

Message from the Chair of the Trust Board



The Board believes adamantly that education is the springboard for life. It is determined therefore that ROBUS should be founded on 3 enduring pillars:

- The best possible education, experience and environment (learning and caring) for its pupils;
- The best possible environment for its staff to teach, nurture and support their pupils; and
- An open and active relationship with its families and the communities it serves.

We believe that this foundation will enable the Trust to meet its goals enabling our pupils and staff to excel, realising their potential. We also believe that the Trust and its commitment to challenge and support is the springboard to unleashing the talent and energy of its academies. We are determined to nurture and sustain this.

The Board is delighted therefore to endorse this Strategic Plan and commends the CEO and team for the work and understanding that underpins it. It sets out how we will achieve our vision, sustain our values and achieve the outcomes that our pupils and staff rightly deserve. It provides the guidance, support that our academies need. It ensures that the Trust and its academies are focused on improving teaching and learning, leadership and governance and raising standards. It rightly focuses us on our pupils and their outcomes. Outcomes enabled by efficient and effective systems and processes (Experience, Finance, HR, Infrastructure and Risk) that allow our academies to focus on delivering exceptional educational outcomes and flourish.

The Board looks forward to its work with the CEO and its academies to realise an ambitious Strategic Plan and a shared journey.

David Norris OBE
Chair of the Trust Board

Introduction

Message from the Chief Executive Officer



We are enormously proud of our academies and of the leaders, governors, teachers and support staff who every day ensure all pupils enjoy and make good progress in their learning, both academic and personal

This is the second strategic planning cycle for ROBUS Multi Academy Trust. We present this plan in the context of having been through the COVID-19 pandemic: a time that stretched our resources but also elicited the most remarkable response from our academies. The Trust (and by that we mean our staff) has adapted and learned, showing amazing flexibility. We enter this next phase with a renewed sense of purpose to maximise the outcomes for the affected generation of pupils. In this plan, our Trustees have

charged us with collaborating more deeply to improve outcomes and experience for disadvantaged pupils and for those with special educational needs.

My role is to work together with the Board of Trustees and the leaders of each academy to create the vision, strategic direction and teaching and learning environment that will enable children across our Trust to thrive, regardless of their background or starting point. The leaders within the Trust are relentless in ensuring that our children flourish and empower their staff and wider communities to have the same high expectations of both the children and themselves.

One of the most important priorities for the Trust is to build capacity to ensure that we always have the ability to meet needs within our academies. We believe that in order to build capacity we need to not only grow leadership from within, but also be outward looking and develop close relationships with other academies, MATs and organisations. When we started in 2014, we said that providing the very best training to our staff would be at the heart of all that we do. Excellent staff make an excellent Trust, and we look forward to seeing the continuing impact of the best professional training on our talented staff and on the learning in our academies.

Our academies serve their local communities and have their own unique identity. The Trust values the healthy diversity within our academies and encourages member academies to further develop their own distinctive culture, ethos and character. Being part of a Multi Academy Trust has already provided member academies with a range of financial and practical benefits. Our role is to ensure each academy is financially secure. We want communities to be proud of their local ROBUS academy and are determined to make it the first choice for all families. We want to transform the lives of the pupils in our academies and support them to grow and thrive as kind, ambitious future citizens.

We are stronger together in our pursuit of excellence.

Emma Dawson
Chief Executive Officer

Vision

A MAT that delivers outstanding education, opportunities care for its pupils founded on a tangible determination to ensure collaboration and support in and between its academies, communities and stakeholders enabling all to thrive, grow and achieve their full potential.

A MAT that demonstrates that it is stronger together in pursuit of excellence.

Values

- Collaboration within the academies, the MAT and further afield
- Aspiration to achieve and sustain excellence in everything that we do
- Transformation by being the springboard for our children's and our staff's success

Aims

In ROBUS Multi Academy Trust we aim to give:

Every child:

- A rich and exciting curriculum enabling them to excel academically, socially and emotionally.
- The opportunity to develop high self-esteem, to build confidence, to be inquisitive, and to be courageous.
- A motivating and memorable learning experience that flames the desire for lifelong learning.
- A humanitarian appreciation of the need for self-respect and respect of others.

Our staff:

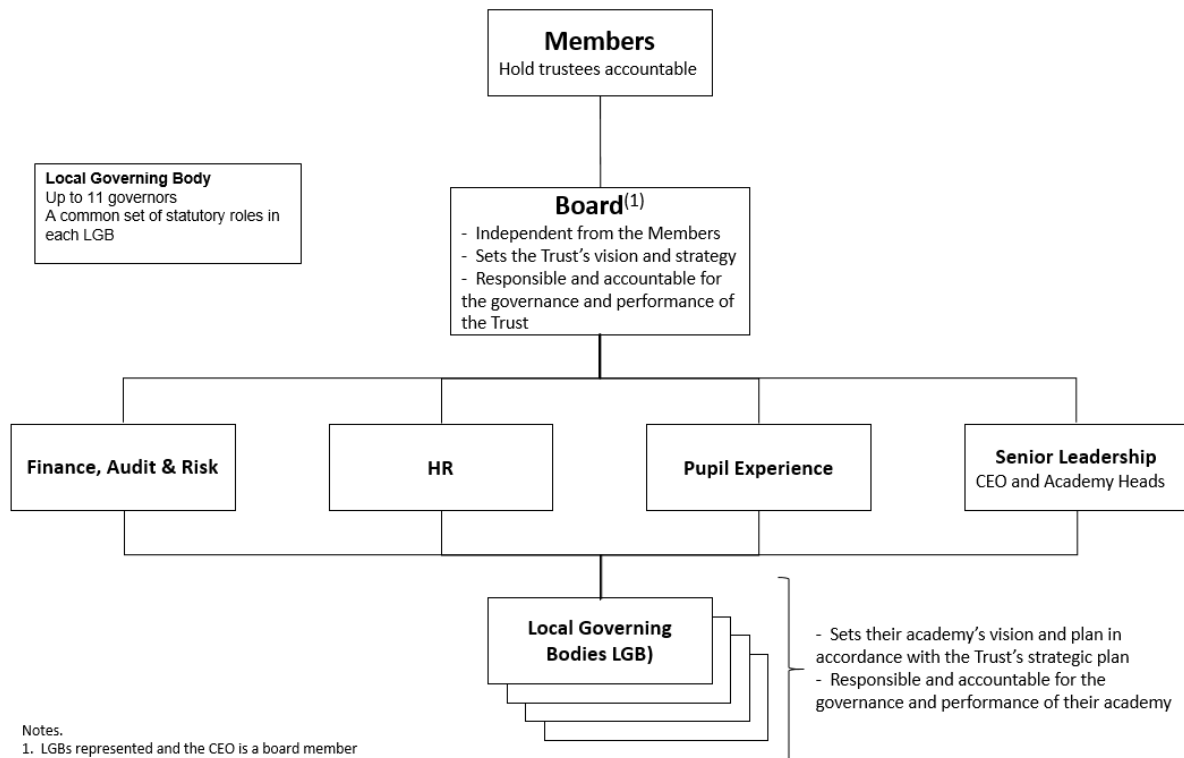
- The environment and support they need to succeed, aspire and grow.

Our communities:

- A safe, trusted and welcoming environment and staff for them in which their children can achieve their full potential.

Governance Structure

The ROBUS Trust is governed by a Board of Trustees who are accountable to the Members and have overall responsibility and ultimate decision-making authority for all the work of the Trust, including the establishing of the academies operated by the Trust.



Governance

The Trust has clearly defined roles and responsibilities for Members, Board of Trustees, CEO, Local Governing Bodies and Academy Leadership Teams through its Scheme of Delegation.

Members

The Members of ROBUS MAT are the guardians of the governance of the Trust with the general duty to further the Trust's charitable purpose of advancing education for the public benefit in the UK. They are responsible for ensuring the Trust complies with all aspects of law and regulation to it, and operates within the requirements set out in the Trust's Articles of Association, the Academies Financial Handbook and current policy of the Department for Education and Charity Commission.

Core functions

- Members will hold the Trustees accountable for ensuring that the Trust's Objects (as set out in its Articles of Association) are met and that the income and property of the Trust shall be applied solely towards the promotion of the Object.
- Members will be responsible for appointing or removing Members and for appointing or removing Trustees as set out in the Trust's Articles of Association.
- Members are responsible for the appointment or removal of the Trust's auditors.
- Members can amend the Trust's Articles of Association (subject to permission from DfE/Charity Commission for certain clauses).
- Members can direct the Trustees to take specific action in certain circumstances.

Accountability

Accountable to the Secretary of State for Education.

Trustees

Core functions are:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction.
- Holding the Chief Executive and the Leadership Team to account for the educational performance of academies and pupils, and the performance and management of staff.
- Overseeing the financial performance (including value for money (VfM)) of the Trust and its academies.

Responsibilities include:

- Monitoring the work of Local Governing Bodies.
- Assessing and managing the principal risks to the Trust.
- Appointing the CEO and holding him/her to account for the Trust's overall performance, and for discharging the role of the Accounting Officer.
- Ensuring that the Trust operates with prudent financial planning and remains solvent.

Trustees' duties, under the Companies Act 2006, include:

- Acting within their powers.
- Promoting the success of the Trust.
- Exercising independent judgement.
- Exercising reasonable care, skill and diligence.
- Avoiding conflicts of interest.
- Declaring any interest in proposed transactions or arrangements.

Role of the Local Governing Body

The role of the Local Governing Body (LGB), as delegated by the Trust Board, is to support the effective operation of the Trust and its policies by overseeing all matters in each academy relating to pupils' learning and well-being. The core function of an LGB covers all factors which relate to, and underpin, good teaching and learning and to also ensure that the Trust Board remains aware of any issues and risks within each academy.

Each academy within the Trust has a maximum of eleven LGB members, comprising:

- Headteacher
- 2 Staff Governors
- at least 2 co-opted/Community Governors
- at least 2 Parent Governors

For Local Governing Bodies to carry out their role effectively all governors must be:

- Prepared and equipped to take their responsibilities seriously.
- Acknowledged by the Senior Staff in the academies and accountable, notwithstanding their representation and the requirement to recuse themselves when appropriate, to the Trust Board.
- Supported by the appropriate authorities in their role.
- Willing and able to monitor and review their own performance.

We would expect that the core business of each Local Governing Body to:

- Review and monitor the implementation and impact of the School Improvement Plan.
- Monitor and review Progress and Attainment.
- Review Headteacher performance.
- Review and monitor the implementation and impact of the Curriculum.
- Ensure that feedback from external quality assurance, including internal audit, is acted on appropriately.
- Review and monitor financial performance and budgets.

Our Key Performance Indicators against our objectives

Trustees will meet a minimum of 6 times a year and receive reports relating to the following Key Performance Indicators. KPIs are specific measurements used to gauge performance – indicating an improvement or a deterioration in performance against objectives. Our KPIs are monitoring and decision-making tools.

- **Standards/Outcomes**

- ✓ Academies are at least good and/or improve their Ofsted inspection rating.
- ✓ Academies can demonstrate that their curriculum is ambitious, fully inclusive and designed to give all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND, the knowledge, skills and cultural capital they need to succeed in life.
- ✓ Academies can evidence successful safeguarding systems are in place.
- ✓ Academies on track to meet or exceed National Averages (NA) or Trust targets (whichever is the higher) at EYFS, Phonics, KS1, KS2 (Reading, Writing and Maths plus Combined at KS2).
- ✓ Parent and pupil survey data illustrates high levels of satisfaction.
- ✓ Monitoring shows that teaching across the MAT is effective.
- ✓ Academies to be above national averages for attendance and below national averages for Persistent Absence (PA).

- **Human Resources**

- ✓ Academies are fully staffed.
- ✓ Absence rates among staff is 5% or less (contextualised to allow for any unavoidable absence due to long term sickness, maternity etc).
- ✓ Staff survey data illustrates high levels of satisfaction.
- ✓ Retention of staff is at least 85%.
- ✓ Pupil to teacher ratios compare favourably to national levels.
- ✓ All staff across the Trust are engaged in the Grow model of Performance Management and access/receive bespoke CPD programmes, positively impacting on outcomes and performance.

- **Finance/Operational/Estates**

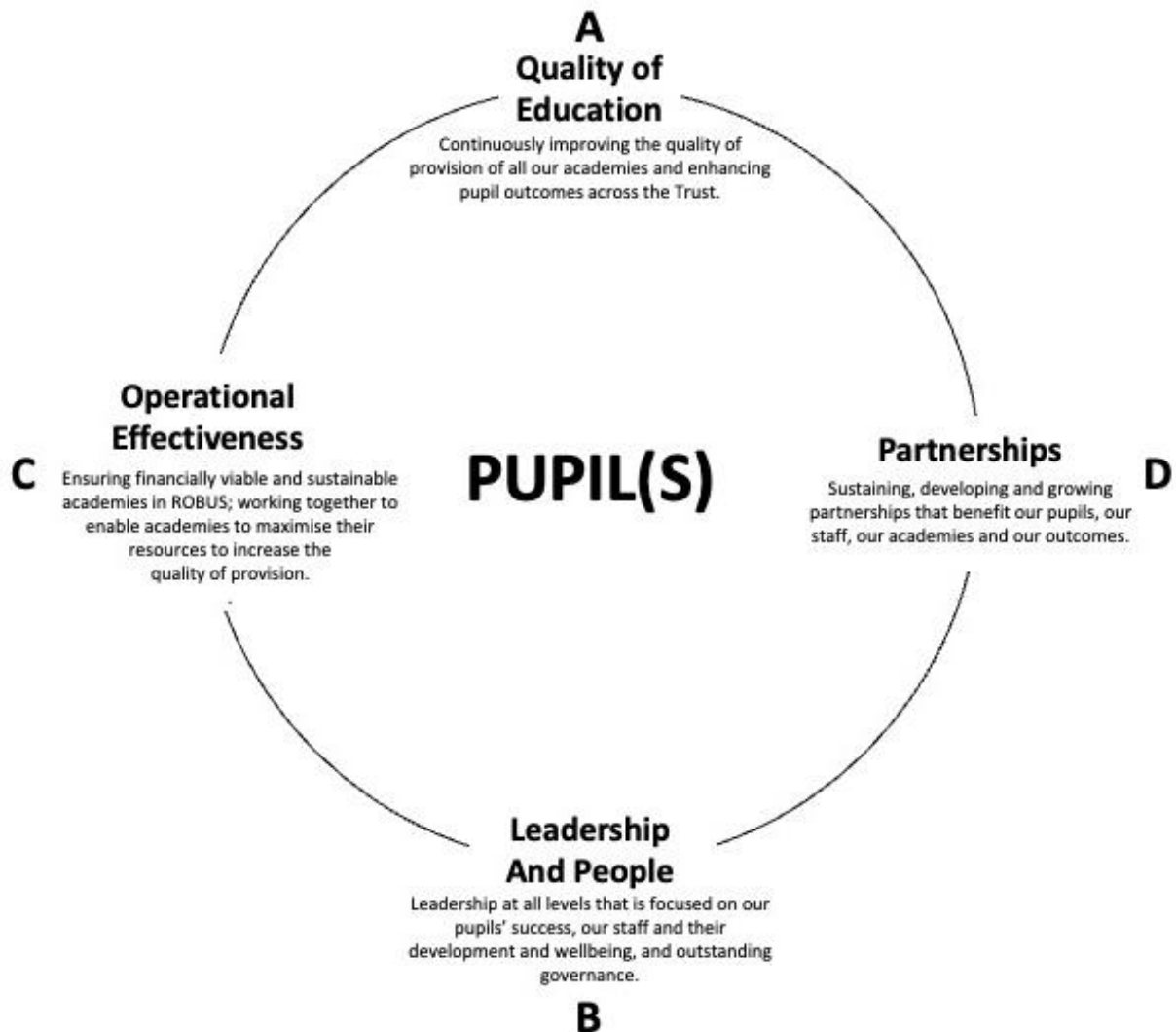
- ✓ The number on roll of Trust academies should be a minimum of 95% of potential numbers and be full in EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage).
- ✓ All academies effectively operate Trust systems and deliver better value at lower cost with a target of ensuring a surplus budget and that target reserves are met.
- ✓ All academies are fully compliant with health and safety, safeguarding and other statutory requirements
- ✓ Audit reports identify no high-risk aspects.
- ✓ Accounts filed with Companies House for public access by 31st May of the following year and on the Trust website by 31 January of the following year.
- ✓ Trust to submit audited financial statements, Auditor's Management Letter, annual summary internal scrutiny report and accounts submission coversheet by 31 December to ESFA
- ✓ All statutory returns submitted on time.

- **Governance**

- ✓ All Members and Trustees fully understand their duties and responsibilities as Company Directors and Charity Trustees as laid out in the Companies Act 2006.
- ✓ Attendance at Full Board and Committee meetings to average 90% or higher over the academic year.
- ✓ The Scheme of Delegation is reviewed annually.
- ✓ Academies have a full complement for their Local Governing Bodies, with an appropriate set of skills and experiences to undertake their defined roles.
- ✓ A Regular review of skills matrix of each Board/Committee and high quality training ensures trustees and governors have the ability to deliver their core functions.

Strategic Priorities

The Trust's success (outcomes, agility, resilience, sustainability and reputation) rests on four (4) strategic objectives which take account of the government's white paper definition of a strong trust. These objectives shape and inform work across the Trust and in its Academies:



Strategic Objective A: Quality of Education - Continuously improving the quality of provision in all our academies and transforming outcomes for all pupils. (School Improvement)

Success Criteria.

1. The curriculum in place in all academies is innovative, ambitious and designed to give all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND, the knowledge, skills and cultural capital they need to succeed in life.
2. Outcomes in all ROBUS Academies is in the top quartile nationally, for all pupil groups and the attainment gap is closing for SEND and/or disadvantaged pupils.
3. There is a focus on ensuring our pupils are strong, independent learners who will flourish in the next steps of their educational journey and beyond.
4. Attendance in all ROBUS Academies is above national average and persistent absenteeism is below the national average.
5. All ROBUS Academies maintain or improve their most recent Ofsted grading in their next section 5 or Section 8 Ofsted inspection.
6. A rigorous and robust programme of quality assurance / school improvement is in place that helps to support staff, build expertise and capacity, and raise standards.

Why is it important?		
<p>To ensure that our pupils thrive in modern Britain, the quality of education in Trust academies needs to be exceptional, not only in academic subjects but in all aspects of the curriculum. Our pupils will need to be self-managers and self-starters in order to take on the challenges they will face when leaving education. The principle of developing and offering a curriculum that encourages and enables pupils in each ROBUS academy to realise their full potential and excel both as individuals and as part of a team is central to our strategy.</p>		
Indicators of success/Milestones		
2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Curriculum development continues to be top priority in all academies with all subject leaders supported to achieve excellence in the provision in their subject. 2. A ROBUS education offer is formalised and published, which includes subject reviews, subject networks and external expertise, to support continued improvement in each academy. 3. Leaders, governors and trustees have a clear understanding of the performance of the academies in the trust. 4. A three year collaborative Robus Research Review project, with a focus on creating 'strong' learners is in place. 5. An SEND strategy is developed, working in partnership with local schools and MATs, to ensure that increased need and complexity of need is managed effectively across the Trust. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress and attainment for all children continues to be above national and improving in both core and foundation subjects. • The Robus Research Review project is well established and all pupils have progressed towards the goal of being 'self-regulated, strong' learners. • ROBUS education offer is established and all stakeholders understand the support schools gain through working as a trust. • Targeted and appropriate provision promotes social mobility and is delivering ambitious outcomes for SEND and disadvantaged pupils. • An Audit of the digital literacy curriculum in each academy is undertaken to explore the skills, expertise and resource available can be shared across the trust. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress and attainment for all children continues to be above national and improving in both core and foundation subjects. • All aspects of the Robus Research Review will have been embedded and pupils across the Trust will have an excellent understanding of how they learn best and will have developed a strong attitude to all aspects of their learning • ROBUS education offer embedded and refined to ensure capacity, quality and sustainability. • Targeted and appropriate provision promotes social mobility and is delivering ambitious outcomes for SEND and disadvantaged pupils. • Costed 3-5 year ROBUS digital strategy in place to develop the provision for children to become expert, responsible digital citizens.
Which strategies and plans will deliver/monitor action?		
Individual School Improvement Plans (SIP).		
Evaluation/challenge of SIP and SEFs.		
Local Governing Body scrutiny/Trust Board scrutiny		

Strategic Objective B: Leadership and people - providing outstanding governance, executive leadership and academy leadership at all levels with clear succession planning; attracting, developing and retaining the best people to work in our academies.

Success Criteria

1. The Board of Trustees and all those responsible for governance across ROBUS have the knowledge and skills to act strategically in the best interests of the Trust, governing in accordance with its Articles of Association/Scheme of Delegation and having highly effective governance arrangements.
2. There are approved and monitored development programmes that set a minimum standard in place for all staff, Governors and Trustees. For staff, these should, wherever possible, include the link between CPD and SIP.
3. The ethos across ROBUS academies is one committed to ensuring equality and diversity in the workplace and that staff wellbeing is high on the agenda so that we attract, develop and retain talented and capable staff to posts in our Trust.
4. Future leaders, headteachers and chairs of local governing bodies are nurtured and developed to ensure effective succession planning for Trust academies.

B1) Effective governance

Why is it important?		
Highly effective leadership and governance is pivotal for the success and sustainability of our Trust and academies to ensure that the highest of standards are set and met in all aspects of Trust life. Research suggests that children’s outcomes are intrinsically linked to the leadership capacity (governance and executive leaders) of the academy they attend.		
Indicators of success		
By July 2023-24	By July 2024-25	By July 2025-26
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Risk Management Plan is updated. 2. Self-evaluation of the Trust and Local Governing Bodies is effective in informing future training and developments and succession planning. 3. Trustees can articulate the effectiveness of their monitoring of the work of the LGBs with regards to statutory compliance – safeguarding / health and safety. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Management plan kept up to date and being used at Trust and LGB level to manage risks • Development plans are used effectively to drive the continual improvement of the effectiveness of the board. • Succession plan is in place at both Trust and LGB level. • Scheme of Delegation is reviewed to ensure that it is ‘fit for purpose’ on a yearly basis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow up review of Governance is completed by a National Leader of Governance and plans put in place for further development. • Scheme of Delegation is reviewed to ensure that it is ‘fit for purpose’ on a yearly basis.
Which strategies and plans will deliver/monitor action?		
Robus Equality and Diversity Action Plan		
Trust and LGB Improvement Plans/ Self evaluation		

B2) Effective recruitment, retention, development and succession planning for all roles in Trust academies (being an excellent employer)

Why is it important?		
For our pupils to enjoy a truly excellent experience we must provide consistently efficient administrative systems and excellent teaching backed by high quality professional development and support. Staff motivation and skills are key to the quality of our learners' experience and staff development and morale are central to the Trust's vision.		
Indicators of success		
2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Leaders have reviewed the Trust equality and diversity policies related to employees and any actions necessary are undertaken. 2. A career development continuum is established to allow opportunities for the development of all staff across the Trust and to ensure that good practice is shared. 3. Performance Management processes, Continuous Professional Development and staff wellbeing systems across the Trust are evaluated and refined. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders, governors and trustees have a clear idea as to how the trust vision for equality, diversity and inclusion (ED&I) for employees is being enacted. • A career development continuum is embedded from early career framework (ECF) to Executive headship and Trust wide talent map and succession plan in place • ROBUS has clear offer of staff wellbeing, rewards, development which is recognised and valued by all staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Trust vision for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is at the heart of all decisions on recruitment and retention. • ROBUS is recognised as an excellent employer (kite mark) • The continuum for career development across all academies within the Trust to encourage secondments across the Trust.
Which strategies and plans will deliver/monitor action?		
Robus one year Strategic Improvement Plan		
School Improvement Plans.		

Strategic Objective C: Operational effectiveness - ensuring financially viable and sustainable academies in ROBUS; working together to enable academies to maximise their resources to increase the quality of provision.

Success Criteria

1. To support academies to maximise the resources to improve outcomes for pupils and young people through activity such as the joint procurement of services to bring about better value for money and economies of scale.
2. To develop an efficient and effective academy estate which supports and responds to enable the delivery of education services across the Trust.
3. To regularly review Trust staffing to ensure that benefit can be made of consolidating roles across the Trust when the opportunity arises.
4. To investigate other revenue streams that could be used to provide additional educational opportunities/services

Why is it important?		
Trust Executive, Trustees and Members have a legal duty to manage the Trust's finances responsibly. We have a moral responsibility to ensure that all money is spent in pursuit of better provision for our pupils and young people. We must meet all our legal and moral obligations and be open and transparent.		
Indicators of success		
2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Financial software (Access) is in place and being used effectively to ensure best value for money and efficiencies. 2. Explore and exploit funding streams to support the financial stability of the trust. 3. Review roles and responsibilities within business functionality to avoid duplication, develop expertise and increase capacity. 4. Implement a marketing strategy to ensure that Robus academies continue to be first choice for parents in the area. 5. Review Estate plans across the trust and Develop a ROBUS Estate vision and strategic plan. 6. Develop a ROBUS Digital vision and strategic plan 7. Establish a costed action plan to enable each academy to return to a balanced, in-year budget by the start of 2024/25. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costed 3-5 year Trust Estate Management vision and Strategy, including digital strategy being delivered. • Climate action plan to be developed and the Estates Management Strategy updated to reflect our 'Net Zero' ambitions - and to include carbon reduction goals at Trust and academy levels. • A contract register for each Academy and the Trust has now been created and is managed by the TBM and CEO to ensure value for money and consistency/ alignment of contracts where possible. • Academies undertake testing of their business continuity and critical incidents plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a costed action plan to deliver our 'Net Zero' ambition. Research and Identify funding streams. Implement carbon reduction initiatives • Digital strategy is implemented and reviewed • Trust Estate Management Strategy implemented and reviewed. • Reserves in each academy are at least 5% of GAG. • Efficiency has been found in establishing a contract register.
Which strategies and plans will deliver/ monitor action?		
3 year Financial plans/ budgets		
Estate Plans		
School Improvement Plans		

Strategic Objective D: Developing and growing our partnership: Strategic growth of our existing partnerships, working alongside other local academies and teaching academies for the benefit of all our staff and pupils.

Success Criteria

1. Robus MAT has a growth strategy in place clearly stating in what context and within which principles further academies might join to strengthen our partnership.
2. Robus MAT is outward looking, engaging with other local academies through BATIC Trust and BTSA to ensure services such as professional development and mental health provision are enhanced, leading to improved outcomes for all.
3. Links are made with the special academies in the local area to ensure the right support at the right time for all children with SEND.

Why is it important?		
To continue to keep developing and improving our academies to achieve the best outcomes for pupils and to ensure sustainability, as a Trust we need to be outward looking. This means actively engaging in local and regional networks and continually reviewing our vision for growth.		
Indicators of success/Milestones		
By July 2023-24	By July 2024-25	By July 2025-26
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Systems and capacity is in place to ensure that our sustainable growth strategy can be enacted and ROBUS grows by one school. 2. Relationships and credibility are built with DfE/Regional Director, Local Authorities (Southend/Essex) and other schools/trusts. 3. ROBUS continues to play a lead role and benefit from the Benfleet and Thundersley inter school Cluster (BATIC) partnership and Benfleet Team Supporting All (BTSA). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New schools quickly, smoothly and effectively included within Robus systems securing immediate benefits from Trust membership. • Scale of central team matches service needs of schools. • A strong relationship and credibility exists with DfE/Regional Director, Local Authorities and other schools/trusts is built and all are clear about the benefits of what we offer • One school has joined the trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One school requiring support joins the trust • The Trust central team is embedded and has the capacity to ensure that it can support all schools to continue to improve. • The Trust has at least 1500 pupils on role or 6 schools.
Which strategies and plans will deliver/ monitor action?		
Robus one year Strategic Improvement Plan		
Schools Joining ROBUS plan		

Robus Multi Academy Trust

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