THE DEAN TRUST
Believe Achieve Succeed

# STRATEGIC PLAN 2026 - 2029

**BELIEVE • ACHIEVE • SUCCEED**

# Executive Summary

This plan sets out The Dean Trust's strategic ambitions across eight key priority areas. Together they communicate how we will deliver our vision for every pupil to Believe, Achieve and Succeed whilst also improving outcomes for all of the communities we serve.

**8**
**Strategic priorities**

**11**
**Schools across 4 local authorities**

**c9000**
**Pupils**

**c1100**
**Employees**

*Each priority sets out a clear ambition and the key success criteria by which we will measure progress.*

# Our Vision Mission & Values

**OUR VISION** For all our pupils to BELIEVE in themselves, ACHIEVE their potential and SUCCEED in their journey through life.

## OUR MISSION

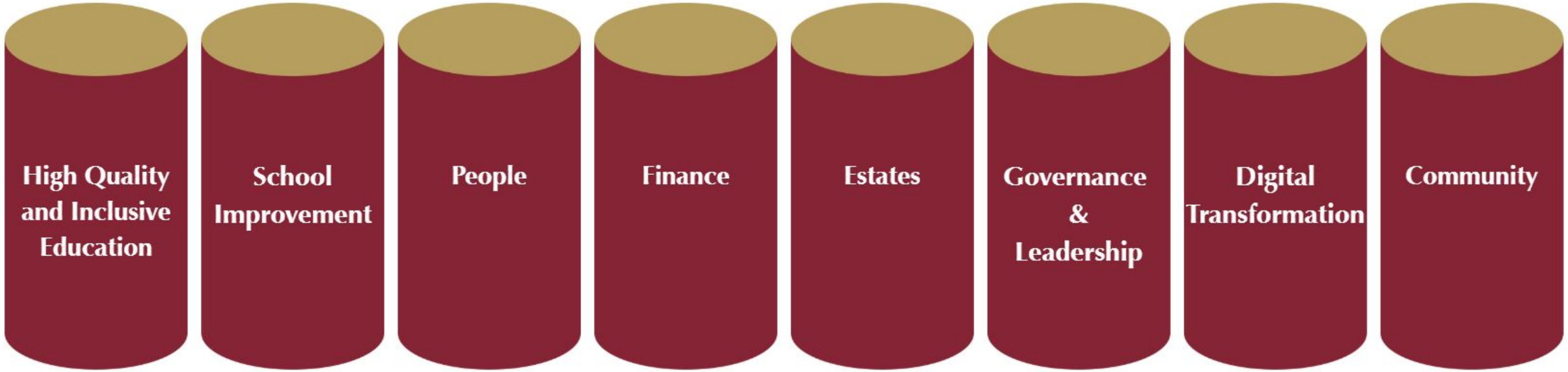
- Put pupils first
- Invest in the most talented, dedicated workforce
- Have an inclusive environment that values diversity
- Provide pupils with experiences to acquire powerful knowledge, transferable skills, and social and cultural capital
- Work collaboratively with our partners to nurture global citizens

## OUR VALUES

- Ambitious and Aspirational
- Resilient and Determined
- Inquisitive and Dedicated to Learning
- Socially and Globally Responsible

# Our Strategic Priorities

Eight strategic priorities that together, deliver our vision. Each is set out in detail on the pages that follow.



# High Quality & Inclusive Education

| | STRATEGIC PRIORITY | AMBITION | KEY SUCCESS CRITERION 1 | KEY SUCCESS CRITERION 2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | **Curriculum Development** | To develop a rich, broad and exciting Trust curriculum to meet the needs of all our pupils across the three domains of academic, co-curricular and character. | • The Trust curriculum allows all schools to access the Strong Standards aspects of the Ofsted framework. | • User feedback from the Trust curriculum shows a high degree of satisfaction with pupil engagement and joy in learning. |
| 2 | **Attainment Gap** | To close the outcome gap for disadvantaged pupils, with particular reference to white working-class pupils as an area of national concern that has direct relevance to a large number of Trust pupils. | • We clearly evidence the positive impact of our Pupil Premium strategy on outcomes, including white working-class pupil cohorts. | • The gap for progress measures shows a rapidly closing trajectory; attainment measures show a consistent trajectory moving beyond national measures. |
| 3 | **Assessment** | To have an Assessment Strategy that supports schools and the School Improvement team to achieve their goals. | • We know clearly what our children are achieving, whether it matches their capability, and we have strong processes to close any gaps. | • Our Trust data captures are robust and inform the Board and Executive with accuracy and clarity, allowing effective support and challenge in the best interests of our pupils |
| 4 | **Attendance and Belonging** | To strengthen our attendance strategy through an inclusive curriculum and school environments that allow pupils to feel safe, a sense of belonging, and a sense of self-worth. | • Our attendance measures show stronger outcomes than national measures. | • Our analysis of belonging shows that pupils feel connected and part of their school community. |
| 5 | **Behaviour for Learning** | To have a behaviour curriculum that teaches pupils to behave well within a school society and to develop the effective learning and study skills they need to achieve and succeed. | • The Trust has a published behaviour curriculum, as a strand of the Character curriculum, that supports access to Strong Standards judgements on the Ofsted framework. | • Learning and study skills are explicitly taught within the academic and behaviour curricula to a level that gives access to the strongest possible outcomes in external examinations. |

# School Improvement

| | STRATEGIC PRIORITY | AMBITION | KEY SUCCESS CRITERION 1 | KEY SUCCESS CRITERION 2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | School Improvement Model | We develop a School Improvement Model that consistently takes schools from their starting points, (including categories of concern) to 'Strong' and 'Exceptional'. | • Schools in categories of concern are supported to improve in a targeted time frame. | • Schools seeking to become centres of excellence also receive targeted and timed support to do so. |
| 2 | Quality Assurance Model | We use a robust quality assurance model for schools that leads to improved outcomes across externally validated pupil data metrics and measures of teaching and learning quality. | • There is consistency across schools in the QA models. | • Our KPIs around quality of teaching and pupil outcomes are met. |
| 3 | Assessment Model | We use assessment effectively to define school improvement priorities and assess their effectiveness. | • We have reliable and accessible data at the point of need, visibly linked to school and trust improvement plans. | • We demonstrate clearly from our data that our strategies are positively impacting school improvement and respond and amend in an agile way when they are not. |
| 4 | Instructional Coaching | Introduce and embed a programme of coaching and mentoring for all teachers and classroom-based staff that consistently develops their effectiveness as classroom practitioners. | • Every member of classroom-facing staff receives high-quality and effective coaching and mentoring on the prescribed cycle. | • The effectiveness of both teaching and learning in our classrooms improves on a visible and measured trajectory over time. |
| 5 | Integrated Appraisal | Effectively use appraisal to encourage classroom practitioners to be reflective and focused on improving their practice throughout their careers. | • The appraisal policy and process reflects the needs of the organisation and it is focused for classroom staff continually developing their practice. | • The appraisal process directs classroom staff towards using the most effective practice to improve both pupil outcomes and engagement. |

# People

| | STRATEGIC PRIORITY | AMBITION | KEY SUCCESS CRITERION 1 | KEY SUCCESS CRITERION 2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | **Engagement, Inclusion & Culture** | To create a working environment which is an equitable and great place to work. | • Implement and embed an aspirational Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. | • Ensure all of our people live the Trust vision and embody our shared values. |
| 2 | **Resourcing and Retention** | To attract and retain the best people to achieve our strategic priorities and fulfill our vision. | • Ensure our recruitment strategy makes the most of the opportunities presented by local and national recruitment contexts, whilst proactively navigating areas of challenge. | • Ensure our pay, benefits and approach to flexible working are competitive and applied fairly to retain and attract the best possible people |
| 3 | **Health and Wellbeing** | To create a healthy working environment which enables all of our people to thrive. | • Ensure we have great managers with the skills and capability to support all of our employees to succeed. | • Proactively develop systems and practices to ensure workloads are manageable and enable work-life harmony. |
| 4 | **Development and Leadership** | To create a culture in which employee development is a right rather than a privilege. To develop knowledgeable, confident and inspiring leaders who can support the improvement of the Trust. | • Provide a range of training opportunities encourage all of our people to believe, achieve and succeed. | • Develop clear and ambitious career pathways for people, which are integrated into a focused and developmental performance management process. |

# £ Finance

| | STRATEGIC PRIORITY | AMBITION | KEY SUCCESS CRITERION 1 | KEY SUCCESS CRITERION 2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | **Financial Sustainability and Resilience** | To ensure the Trust remains financially sustainable and able to invest in educational excellence through robust financial planning. | • Balanced in year budgets with improved forecasting and scenario planning. | • Strong reserves position aligned to Trust policy. |
| 2 | **Value for Money and Resource Optimisation** | To maximise the impact of every pound spent through efficient, strategic and value-driven use of resources across the Trust. | • Procurement delivers measurable savings and efficiencies. | • Estate, staffing, curriculum and IT resources aligned to need. |
| 3 | **Strong Governance, Compliance and Risk Management** | To maintain the highest standards of financial governance, compliance, transparency and risk management across the Trust. | • Full statutory compliance and clean audit opinions. | • Effective fraud prevention and risk management culture with clear financial accountability at all levels. |
| 4 | **High Performing Finance Service** | To develop a customer-focused and skilled finance function that supports leaders and schools effectively across the Trust. | • Finance viewed as a strategic partner to schools and leaders. | • High quality management information available to stakeholders. |

# Estates

| | STRATEGIC PRIORITY | AMBITION | KEY SUCCESS CRITERION 1 | KEY SUCCESS CRITERION 2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | **Safeguarding our People, Sustaining our Places** | To provide a safe, secure and legally compliant learning environment. | • Embedded culture of accountability and proactive risk mitigation. | • Standardised operational excellence, so every pupil and employee receives the same level of safety in every school. |
| 2 | **Ambitious Leadership to Secure Aspirational Environments** | To achieve excellence in estate management by sustaining a qualified, professional workforce. | • High quality learning environments that directly enhance pedagogical outcomes. | • A fully qualified, CPD driven workforce, zero-gap expertise and highly accredited estates team. |
| 3 | **Building Resilience** | To move our schools from ‘are they safe? To ‘are they sustainable and fit for purpose?’ | • Proactive asset preservation through a five year Planned Preventative Maintenance programme, with capital allocated by highest risk to school continuity. | • Fabric integrity and environmental comfort. |
| 4 | **A Socially Responsible Estates Culture** | To embed a culture of socially responsible ownership where everyone acts as a guardian of our Trust’s resources. | • Environmental accountability and net zero progress, delivering the Trust’s carbon reduction roadmap through disciplined oversight. | • Energy intensity and carbon return on investment, so every capital pound spent works twice for the building and the budget. |

# Governance & Leadership

| | STRATEGIC PRIORITY | AMBITION | KEY SUCCESS CRITERION 1 | KEY SUCCESS CRITERION 2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | **Growth** | To clearly define our Growth Strategy around geography, type of schools and school characteristics, supporting sustainable growth that allows capacity to be built in our services. | • We have a comprehensive Trust Dividend that is attractive to potential partners. | • We see expansion in the number of primary schools in the Trust over the next three years. |
| 2 | **Communication \| Governance** | For communication between the Board and the LGCs (as sub-committees of the Board) to be robust and effective in supporting the Executive and our schools in achieving our strategic aims. | • Feedback documents flow both ways between Board and LGCs to keep each informed of work, decisions and challenge in a summarised format. | • Some members of LGCs are co-opted onto the Board to improve communication flow. |
| 3 | **Communication \| Organisational** | Our Communications Strategy keeps everyone in our organisation involved, informed and having a shared sense of purpose. | • The external communications strategy shows its impact in strong stakeholder feedback. | • The internal communication strategy feedback shows positive impact around a shared sense of purpose and feeling informed. |
| 4 | **Marketing \| Trust and Individual Schools** | We develop a marketing plan for the Trust and for individual schools. | • The Trust growth strategy is supported by a clear and effective marketing plan. | • Trust schools which are not yet full show an improvement in the percentage of children in the local community choosing them. |

# Digital Transformation

| | STRATEGIC PRIORITY | AMBITION | KEY SUCCESS CRITERION 1 | KEY SUCCESS CRITERION 2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | **Cyber Security & Safeguarding** | Ensure our pupils and colleagues are safe whilst online, adhering to KCSIE statutory legislation and embedding robust cybersecurity and data protection standards. | • External cyber security audits identify an embedded culture of online security across the organisation. | • Colleagues across the Trust undertake bi-monthly Phishing Simulations and understand their responsibilities surrounding data security and online safeguarding. |
| 2 | **Embedded Data Management ( in line with GDPR & DfE Best Practices)** | To ensure our data handling exercises are robust, in line with best practice, and support our ambition to enhance learning outcomes through technology integration and data insights. | • Establish recognised processes for preventing, recognising and responding to personal data breaches in alignment with DfE standards (Data Protection in Schools). | • Ensure our schools use a specific data retention schedule to document how long, and where, hard copy records are retained. |
| 3 | **Evidence-based Data Analysis** | To develop a suite of tools and data analysis dashboards to unlock the mystery of 'Performance Trends', allowing educators to intervene early on a pupil's pathway so our pupils achieve the best results and succeed in their life journeys. | • Visibility of all core data metrics for every pupil across the Trust. | • Schools able to develop interventions based on current data insights and future forecast trends based on current trajectories. |
| 4 | **Improved Collaboration \| Lesson Engagement & CPD Opportunities** | Utilising best-in-class EdTech tools to underpin our curriculum, enhancing learning experiences with content-rich designs, captivating lessons and offline resources to take learning beyond the classroom, for anytime, anywhere access. | • Finalise the migration of classroom technology to a common platform, supporting collaboration, sharing of best practice and commonality of product suites Trust-wide. | • Review Trust-wide homework tools with the Director of Systems and Director of Education to ensure all children have access to the best possible learning experiences in and out of the classroom. |
| 5 | **Robust, Scalable Cost Effective & Secure Networks to Underpin Teaching & learning** | Systems are robust and scalable, supporting initiatives led by our curriculum colleagues and acting as enablers to teaching, not barriers. | • Core Systems (Networking, Telephony and Internet Connectivity) meet the DfE IT Standards before the 2030 deadline. | • Alignment between IT and School Improvement Plans to ensure investments in technology underpin individual school priorities. Utilise AI and automation to reduce workloads across exam marking, lesson creation and Finance processes |

# Community

| | STRATEGIC PRIORITY | AMBITION | KEY SUCCESS CRITERION 1 | KEY SUCCESS CRITERION 2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Values | Our pupils are prepared to be socially and globally conscious, responsible citizens. | • Our education programme includes active community engagement for all our pupils. | • Our Character curriculum specifically addresses the aim that pupils are globally and socially conscious, and our Trust Awards provide recognition for this. |
| 2 | Income and Community Use | Utilise our facilities strategically for community use and to generate income to support co-curricular and character curriculum education opportunities for our pupils. | • We are able to generate income to offset the cost of providing enrichment for our pupils. | • Our facility use is maximised so that local community groups have opportunity for access, and we act as hubs for the community. |
| 3 | Localisation | Our local community engagement is driven through our LGCs so that each school has a personalised strategy. | • Each community's unique needs are catered for at school level and communicated to the Trust Executive and Board. | |
| 4 | Partnerships | Work with strategic partners to benefit our communities | • Develop new partnerships that promote opportunities for our pupils which they do not currently have access to | • Refine our opportunities with existing partnerships to ensure they continue to successfully support our pupils. |