

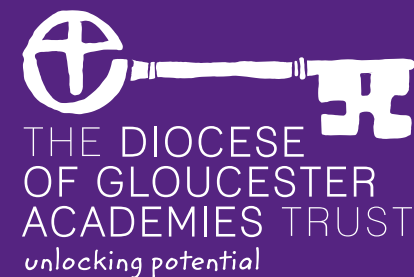


STRATEGIC PLAN

FOR GROWTH TO 35 SCHOOLS

Our vision is to enable all to flourish

PUBLISHED JANUARY 2025



“I HAVE *come that*
they may have **LIFE,**
and have it **TO THE FULL.”**

JOHN 10:10

WELCOME

‘A stage setting is not a background; it is an environment.’

So said the great early twentieth century set designer Robert Edmond Jones. He thought that the scenic elements of a stage should be integrated into the storytelling, in order to give context to a play or movie.

Strategic priorities can often be seen as the preserve of directors and company boards; flashy taglines which have no real bearing on the real, day-to-day work of an organisation. Like a background to a play, nice to look at but not where the real action is.

This is not so with our new strategic priorities.

At the heart of our work as a Trust are core beliefs which shape everything we do.

The first and central belief is found in the Gospel of John, where Jesus tells us that he ‘came that they may have life and have it to the full.’ God made us in his image and longs for us to grow into the full stature of the people he made us to be. It is from this unshakeable belief for our young people that our new strategic priorities have emerged, because we believe that these are the best way to set the scene for children to have life in all its fullness.

Quality of Education, People, Resources, Governance, Estates and Advocacy are not just a background; they are the environment in which the story that God has for each child entrusted to our care can be told.

One of the most important elements of any strategic plan is a sense of ownership. We have arrived at these priorities after wide consultation with local governing boards, school staff, children, and parents, to ensure that there is a strong sense of ownership from all key stakeholders.

So, I am delighted to commend these strategic priorities to you as together we strive for life in all its fullness for all in our community.



*The Reverend Canon
Craig Huxley-Jones*

Chair of the Trust Board





The Trust is a thriving family of forward-thinking schools based in Gloucestershire. I am proud to be part of such a collaborative organisation where aspiration is high, passion for learning runs deep and our Christian values underpin all we do. Established in 2012 with two schools, the Trust has grown steadily to 24 schools (infant, junior and primary) in 2024.

We are boldly passionate about excellence in learning, for both our staff and our children, and are firm in our belief that every child has a right to experience success in an aspirational, inclusive, caring and supportive environment.

Supporting our individual schools to be confident, outward-facing and responsive to the needs of their unique locality is core to who we are. Just like each child, staff member, governor and trustee, each school is unique and precious and retaining the essence of each one is integral to our culture. This is coupled with a strong sense of ‘together we are stronger’ – we celebrate each other’s successes, share good practice and provide support for one another when times are tricky.



This plan is a key document to ensure that, collectively, we continue to further improve our effectiveness and be the best we can be for the children entrusted to us.

Rachel Howie
CEO

OUR VISION AND CORE PRINCIPLES

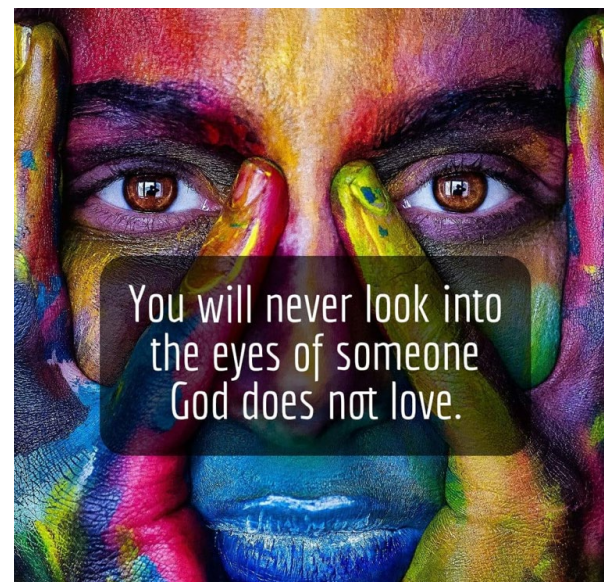
OUR VISION IS TO ENABLE ALL TO FLOURISH

OUR AIMS ARE TO BE:

- * Authentically Christian
- * Boldly passionate about excellence in learning
- * Relentlessly driven in our aspiration for everyone

Our vision is rooted in our Christian Foundation that all in our family should 'experience life in all its fullness'

JOHN 10:10



You will never look into
the eyes of someone
God does not love.

OUR CORE PRINCIPLES

These underpin all we do and the decisions we take.

- * We aspire to be the best we can be in an ever-changing environment – providing opportunities for all to flourish.
- * Within our DGAT family we cherish everyone as individuals; appreciating and celebrating diversity.
- * We act with integrity; we are open to challenge and we are reflective about our practice.
- * We treat everyone with dignity and respect.
- * Through collaboration, in a nurturing community, we grow, learn and achieve.

*Together we are stronger –
School is Trust and Trust is School*



A DGAT school is a special place where the uniqueness of an individual school meets the power of collective capacity – together we are stronger as we seek to unlock the potential within our family.

*Just as a body, though one,
has many parts, but all its many
parts form one body, it is with Christ*

1 CORINTHIANS 12:12

OUR SCHOOLS

In 12 years we have grown to be.....

24 schools

Almost **5000** children

Over **800** staff

5 nurseries

20 CofE primary schools

1 CofE infant school

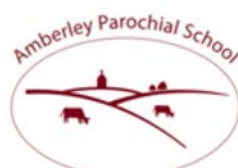
1 community primary school

1 community infant school

15 converter academies

8 sponsored academies

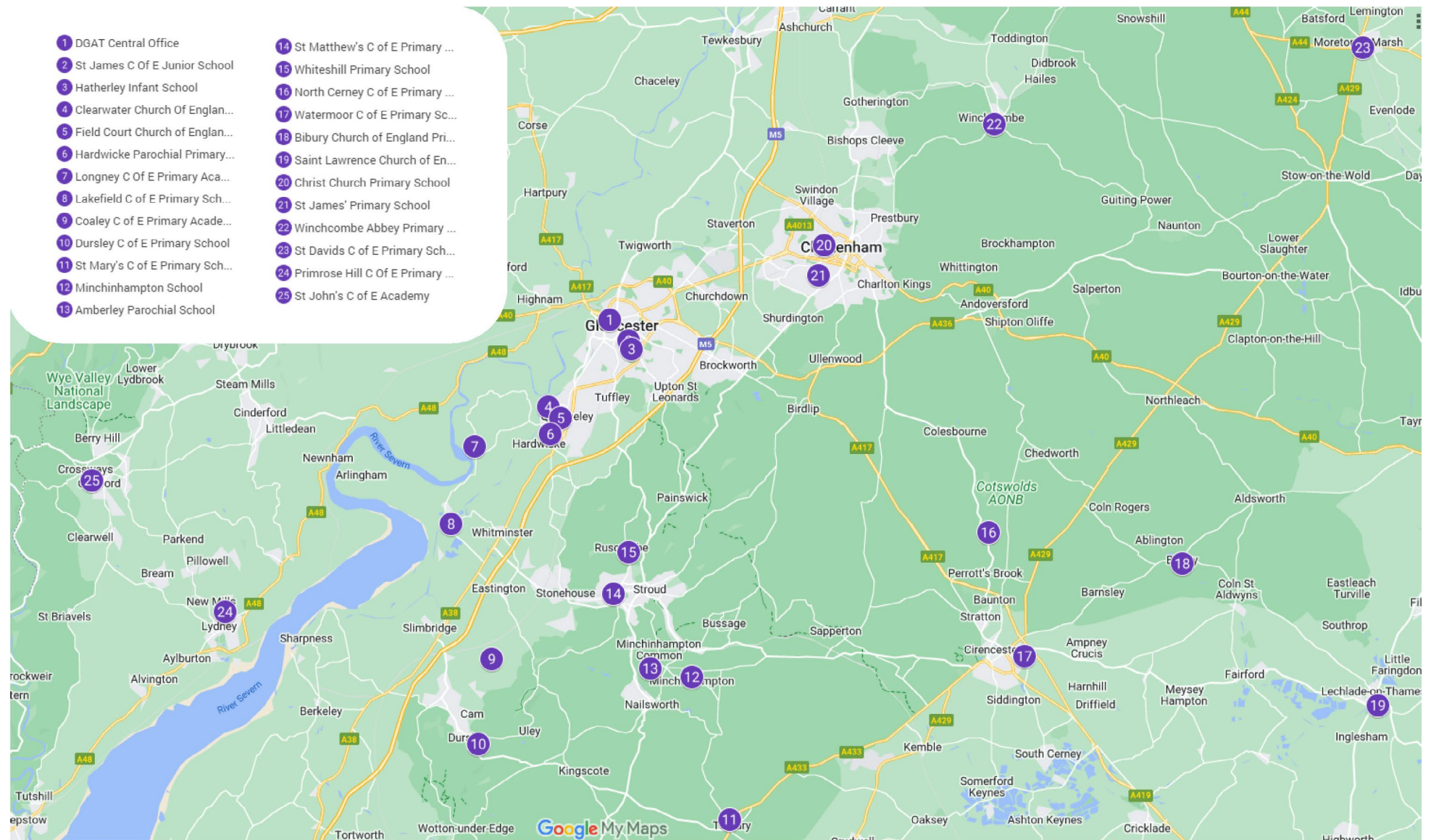
1 free school.





*Schools are NOT SIMPLY
PART of the TRUST,
THEY ARE the TRUST*

THE DGAT FAMILY OF SCHOOLS



GROWTH

The Trust Board is of the view that growth should not be pursued for its own ends and for simply adding schools or pupils numbers to a Trust in the way of empire building or growth for its own sake. Rather, growth should be directly linked to the vision, aims, ethos and culture of the Trust and linked to the strategy of the Diocesan Board of Education.

The Trust's growth strategy is based on a steady and sustainable model of growth of three to four schools per year. Growth will be achieved through a mixture of voluntary converters, sponsored academies and through the bidding for free school provision.

Throughout any period of growth the first priority must be to the schools already in the Trust and the quality of service and provision must not be negatively effected by any expansion of the organisation. Growth must be at the right rate and must lead to the long term success of each of the schools in the Trust and those joining. In addition the Trust will have sufficient capacity to thoroughly onboard new schools, build relationships and develop a full understanding of the new setting.

New schools should feel warmly welcomed and time must be available to invest in developing a shared understanding of the school's context, its community and its strengths and any challenges it faces.



KEY PARTNERSHIPS



The Trust is an integral part of the Diocese of Gloucester and plays its part fully in the diocesan LIFE vision.



The Trust was set up by the Gloucester Diocesan Board of Education and the 5 Members of the Trust are appointed by this group. The Trust enjoys a strong and positive relationship with the GDBE with the Diocesan Director of Education being a Trustee and the CEO sitting on the GDBE.



A key partner for our Trust is the Church of England Education Office. In developing our vision and core principles we paid attention to some key publications including; The Church of England Vision for Education: Deeply Christian Serving the Common Good (2016) and Our hope for a Flourishing Schools System (2023).



The Trust is outward facing committed to supporting organisations beyond itself, for the common good. This is done via staff being trustees or members of steering groups for local and national organisations, providing mentoring, coaching and developmental support for other school Trusts and offering school improvement services for both church and community schools across the diocese.

LISTENING TO OUR STAKEHOLDERS

We recognise that the strength of our strategic plan lies in its ability to reflect the diverse perspectives, experiences, and aspirations of our stakeholders. By aligning our strategic priorities with the needs and expectations of those we serve, we can achieve more impactful and sustainable outcomes. Stakeholders bring unique insights and first-hand experiences that enrich our understanding of challenges and opportunities across our family of schools and is vital for informed decision-making. We are committed to fostering a culture of collaboration and transparency by actively engaging with pupils, parents, staff, local governors, local communities, and partners.

We are committed to ensuring that all voices are heard, fostering a sense of shared responsibility and commitment to the Trust's strategic goals. This is what our stakeholders told us was important:



BELONGING: Staff and pupils to feel respected, valued and that they belong.



ASPIRATION AND EXPECTATIONS: that there are clear and consistent aspiration for all pupils, recognising and celebrating each child as unique and special. Pupils being encouraged and supported to flourish and excel in the gifts they have.



PRAYER: Work in partnership with children to create a Trust prayer that is translated, heard and said in home languages.



ADVOCACY: Recognise and celebrate staff as reliable adults in children's lives.



RESOURCES: To share core resources across the Trust and ensure the funding available enables all to flourish.

STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

In developing this strategic plan our stakeholders told us...

STAFF SAID THEY VALUE...

- * enabling children to grow in independence and confidence so they can succeed
- * ensuring for the best possible outcomes for all children, especially those that are disadvantaged, regardless of their starting points.

CHILDREN SAID THEY WANTED...

- * more strategies to help with their wellbeing
- * to learn more about other cultures.

PARENTS SAID THEY HOPED...

- * the Trust would always ensure that each school's unique vision has a strong influence on provision in addition to each one being part of a wider family
- * schools would always be safe spaces for each child to be who they uniquely are.

FOUNDATION GOVERNORS SAID THEY WOULD VALUE...

- * an increased focus on physical, mental and spiritual health and wellbeing
- * the Trust ensuring government understands the worth of schools and the Trust.

LOCAL GOVERNING BOARDS SAID THEY WANTED...

- * increased SEND provision and support to more positively impact children, families and staff
- * staff and pupils to continue to be respected, valued and feel they have a place.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1 QUALITY OF EDUCATION

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Ensure every child attends a high-quality, inclusive school where they feel safe, succeed, thrive, and are well prepared to make a positive impact in the world.



SUCCESS CRITERIA

- * All schools evaluated to be at least good and effective within 2 years of joining the Trust.
- * Pupil outcomes to be above the national average in all key stages and all subjects.
- * The gaps between disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils and their peers are closing.
- * Attendance is above the national average.

I know the plans I have for you says the Lord...plans to give you hope and a future.
Jeremiah 29:11

2 PEOPLE

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

For our staff to grow, learn and thrive in a collaborative and nurturing community.



SUCCESS CRITERIA

- * Employees consider DGAT a good place to work.
- * Staff absence rates reduce.
- * Staff vacancies are filled by high quality applicants at the first round of recruitment.
- * For all schools to participate and positively engage in the CPDL offer.

Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.
1 Thessalonians 5:11

3 RESOURCES

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

To make effective use of all the trust's resources to enable all to flourish.



SUCCESS CRITERIA

- * The Trust will remain a going concern and be financially sustainable.
- * Year on year savings will be made through collaborative purchasing, procurement activities and organisational structures.
- * Staff resources will be deployed effectively and within the allocated budget.

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.
1 Peter 4:10

4 GOVERNANCE

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

To ensure governance is highly effective and aspirational for the organisation.



SUCCESS CRITERIA

- * The Trust board has a strong and varied skill set.
- * LGBs deliver their delegated responsibilities.
- * All aspects of compliance can be tracked and evidenced.
- * Where appropriate, opportunities are provided for stakeholders to provide their views and feedback

*Where no counsel is, the people fall:
but in the multitude of counsellors there
is safety.*

Proverbs 11:14

5 ESTATES

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Ensure the estate is managed effectively to create safe, secure, sustainable, and stimulating environments for all.



SUCCESS CRITERIA

- * A long-term estate plan is in place that is aligned with Trust priorities and available income.
- * Innovative designs, technologies and practices are utilised to enhance learning, improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions.
- * All sites meet statutory compliance requirements for health and safety, safeguarding and inclusion.

*Be sure you know the condition of your
flocks, give careful attention to your
herds; for riches do not endure forever.*

Proverbs 27:23-24

6 ADVOCACY

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Advocate for stakeholders, especially the most vulnerable, to influence educational policy and practice locally and nationally.



SUCCESS CRITERIA

- * Evidence of active participation in local and national consultation, forums and discussions that influence policy.
- * Increased visibility of the Trust as a representative voice within education.
- * Formation of strong relationships with local authorities, MPs, RD's office, other Trusts.
- * Evidence of collaboration with other Trusts or organisations to address shared challenges or lobby for change.

*Speak out for those who cannot speak for
themselves, for the rights of all.*

Proverbs 31:8