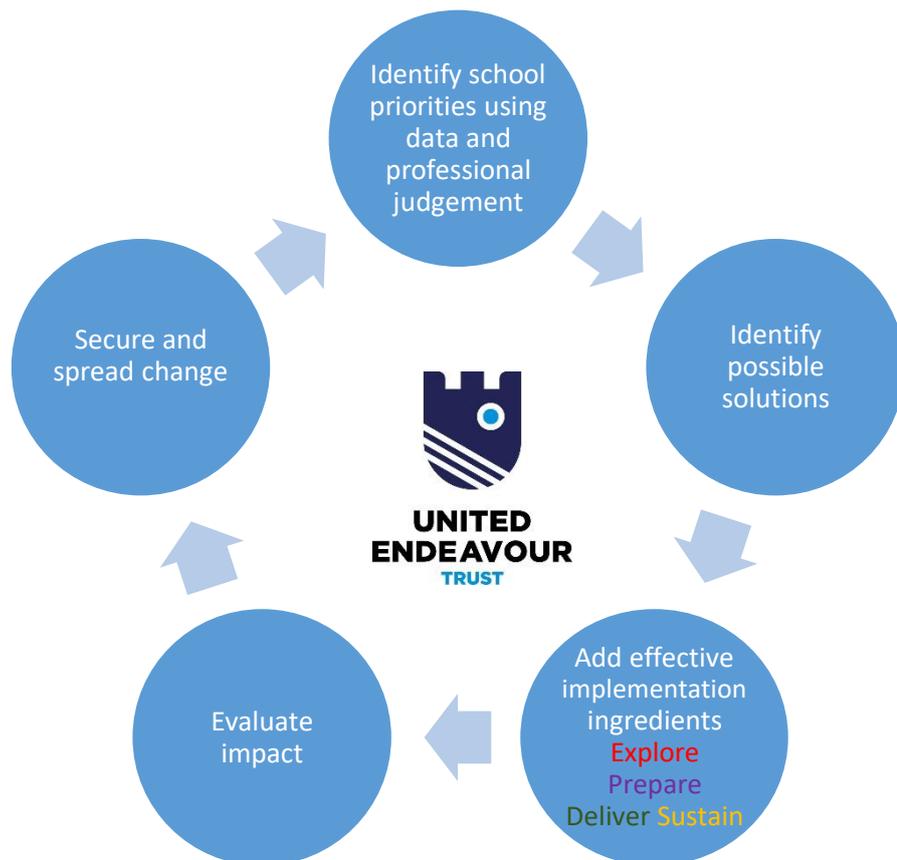# School Improvement Handbook

Our Approach

We make use of a particular organisational approach based on the Education Endowment Fund (EEF) 5 Step School Improvement Cycle

1. Identify school priorities using data and professional judgement

We collect a central Trust data base of published and internal data and undertake annual DATA REVIEWs. We benchmark this data against nationally published data from the DfE and we use Fischer Family Trust data to set academy data in context. We look for patterns, trends, performance by key groups and subject level outcomes. We use SIMS and SISRA to process internal data and identify key challenge questions to address with leaders and governors. Data Challenge reports are created by the CEO and Data Manager following termly data collections and review meetings with academy leaders test queries arising and note progress. Formal reports are then provided to our LGBs and MAT Boards.

To inform our professional judgement of an academy we conduct a number of additional annual reviews which include:
LEADERSHIP REVIEW
PUPIL PREMIUM REVIEW
SEND REVIEW
ACADEMY REVIEW (for schools with significant weaknesses these ACADEMY REVIEWs may be as frequent as half termly)
GOVERNANCE REVIEW
SEF/TIP REVIEW

Additionally, and as appropriate, we also offer the following reviews:
GDPR REVIEW
SAFEGUARDING REVIEW
ACADEMY TO ACADEMY REVIEWS – peer based reviews by key staff from Trust academies in the area of scrutiny required
PERFORMANCE EFFECTIVENESS REVIEWS – largely subject or theme based reviews on a rolling programme – developing leaders to peer review and providing progress reporting for Middle Leaders to inform improvement planning and actions.

2. Identify possible solutions

We work with governors and leaders to support action planning and the use of a number of tools which support planning and the use of plans to regulate activity and ensure that monitoring and evaluation promote account ability and strategic decision making. Our review reports come with clear recommendations and progress against recommendations is regularly revisited.

We use the EEF Toolkit as a common go to tool to support improvement and have worked with our academies to focus on quality first teaching, learning and assessment, metacognition, character development, feedback and monitoring and continuing professional learning programmes as key areas of activity. We use Blooms as the base model for organizing metacognition. Building up a clear picture of priorities and progress against them is at the core of the support and challenge that we provide as a Trust.

We use common formats for recording planning, accountability and self evaluation. We have the following centrally driven proformas:

QA TOOLKIT – a wide range of proformas to focus review of progress and impact on:

- Lesson observations/Learning Walks
- Curriculum Quality Scrutiny
- Work Scrutiny
- Student Voice – Learning/Behaviour/Welfare
- Quality of Learning Environment
- Performance Effectiveness Review templates

Our successful academies are increasingly autonomous in adapting and developing these tools, introducing tools or adaptations of their own to focus on particular aspects of school improvement within their own priorities.

We also provide common formats for:

ACADEMY IMPROVEMENT PLANNING
SELF EVALUATION FORMS
TEAM ACCOUNTABILITY AND SELF ASSESSMENT

3. Add effective implementation ingredients

Explore

We encourage staff to engage in evidence based research and the development of good practice which can be shared. We have developed our own response to Continued Professional Learning Pathways and routes from ITE to NPQs. We focus TLR holders on developing strategy and approaches to improve learning within their faculties. Staff are encouraged to work on educational research projects to further develop their practice and to share good practice and working groups are set up to develop solutions to shorter term development priorities.

We develop management blueprints which articulate key elements of work to be supported in our academies. These cover:

Quality of Education

Behaviour and Attitudes

Personal Development

Leadership and Management

Staff development

Prepare

Collaborative work on planning and matched staff development, including academy and team level planning, is driven by common approaches which academies agree on. This includes lesson planning proformas, Scheme of Work formats and academy by academy articulated expectations of what a lesson looks like at our academy. The opportunity for staff to network across the Trust broadens and strengthens preparation.

Deliver

Inset, twilight training and team meeting calendars are agreed at the start of each year and map out support for delivery of key priorities, approaches and actions. Our aim is to build and maintain momentum in moving the academy, key groups and staff forward . . .delivering our joint plans and new developments.

Sustain

As we develop successful approaches we recognise the need to reward improvement (and the effort that has gone into bringing about improvement). Our aim is to share success and scale up successful developments so that all of our Trust partners and the students we serve can benefit from them

This model of exploring, preparing, delivering and sustaining improved practice is at the heart of our working approaches.

4. Evaluate impact

Academy Improvement Plan, SEF and Team Accountability and Self Evaluation reviews occur regularly throughout the year. The CEO support a termly review of Team Accountability and Self Review documents with the Principal and Heads of Teams. Academy Improvement Plan progress is reported termly to governors along with twice yearly updates of the SEF. We have very clear timetables for the reporting of QA outcomes which drive up to Local Governing Bodies and beyond to the MAT Board and mechanisms for feedback from QA activities to feedback down to staff to help them to continuously improve. This work also provides a valuable and very important role in identifying talent and recognising contributions.

We provide reporting templates for Principals to ensure that reporting to governors is robust and supports strategic discussions about standards and development priorities.

QA outcomes are clearly linked to Appraisal and all staff are provided with their own Teacher Profile – a digital record of their performance, strengths and areas for development and progress against performance objectives agreed as part of appraisal. Staff have individual Dynamic Career Pathways mapped out in discussion with their line manager and CPD is matched to whole academy priorities and individual staff needs and interests.

5. Secure and spread change

Our QA reports clearly identify 'What Went Well' – enabling us to identify and share good practice and where we still have scope to further improve -reports carry clear recommendations for actions.

Annual review of Academy Improvement Plans encourage consolidation of areas of success. Monthly Principal meetings, where Principals from all Trust schools meet formally, ensure that we spread information and share good practice.

Joint staff training sessions and encouragement for Faculties to collaborate ensure that we spread good practice both formally and informally.

We work extensively in Microsoft OneDrive, with centrally organised and facilitated document sharing. A bespoke Management Centre allows staff across the Trust to share key resources. Movement to Teams as the main channel of communication and collaboration is underway.

Additional Areas of Focus and Activity to promote School Improvement

Research from the Educational Development Trust, published in 2016, identified 8 key elements of School Improvement in schools which were making rapid improvement. We have used these to focus on wider elements of Trust function. Additionally, where we can release Principals from dealing with Core Service functions we have allowed them to focus on Leadership & Management; Teaching, Learning & Assessment; Personal Development, Behaviour & Welfare; Outcomes.
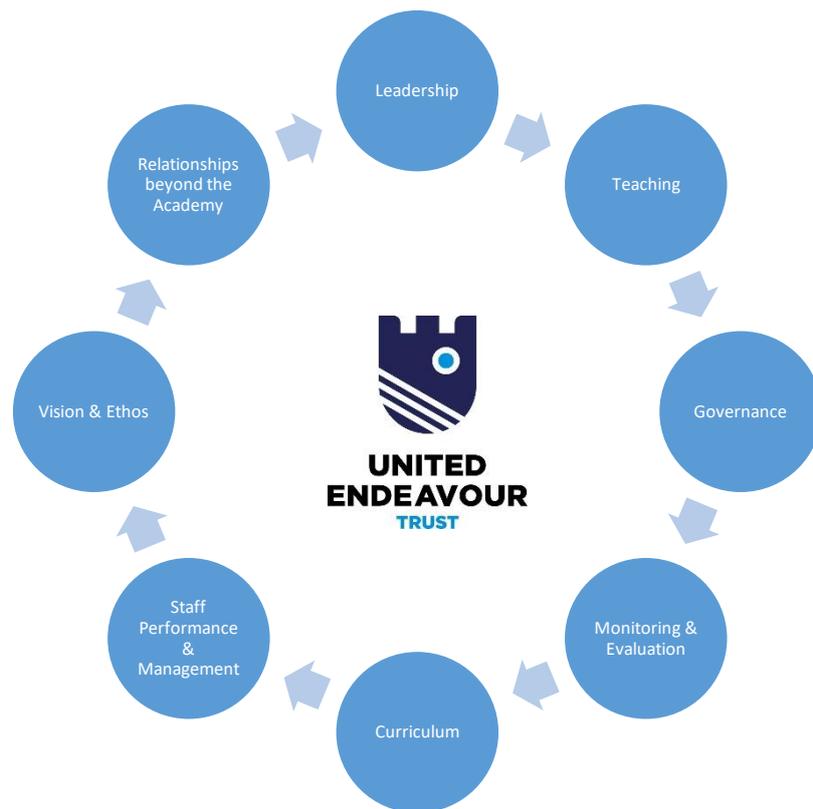
Leadership – Leadership is at the heart of all other matters – it is the key driver.

We focus on:

- **Supporting Principals and SLT Members.** All Principals have a weekly line meeting with the CEO. The CEO is available to support development work with individual members of SLT. Monthly Joint Principal/CEO/Trust Director meetings and termly Joint SLT meetings network leaders into school improvement sharing. We encourage our leaders to undertake training and networking and we broker partnerships with other schools/academies/colleges focussed on joint strategic developments
- **Developing Leaders and work towards distributed leadership**. We share a Leadership Development Programme in common across the Trust – provided internally but promoting NPQs working with local providers. Termly CEO and Principal review meeting with Middle Leaders focus on progress through plans, outcomes and strategic support. All Middle Leaders are supported by a Senior Staff link.

Vision & Ethos – MAT, LGB and School leaders set the vision and ethos for the whole academy and jointly for our work as a Trust.

Governance – Governance is critical in holding our academies to account

We focus on:
- **Training for Governors** – with an annual offer covering statutory aspects of the role and school improvement themes
- **Annual skills audits** are completed to map out Governor competency and identify areas for joint training or briefing
- **Annual Governance Review**

Monitoring & Evaluation – Quality Assurance of work undertaken is a key area of work in the Trust. It enables us to report for the purposes of accountability and strategic decision-making up to the MAT Board and provides valuable feedback to staff on how well they are doing and where they need to develop. See our QA Toolkit and Report Templates.

We focus on:
- Using and developing a well resourced **QA Toolkit**
- **Providing reporting templates for Middle Leaders** to use to collate the outcomes of QA for use with their teams
- **Providing reporting templates for Senior Leaders** to use to collate the outcomes of QA for use with their teams and for whole academy improvement
- **Focus most of our QA activity on Quality of Education**
- **Provide organised data and assessment approaches** which ensure that we use the data produced. Specifically we use:
  - CATs testing to establish baselines on entry
  - SISRA Expected Attainment Pathways – to provide target ranges for individual students in their subjects and clear progress tracking data for use by teachers, managers, leaders and our LGBs and MAT Board.
  - Assessment strategies such as Assessment Maps, Pre Public Examinations, Personal Learning Checklists, Raising Standards Leaders, etc.
  - Cross academy networking to compare data and approaches to improving outcomes.

Curriculum – Revising and streamlining the curriculum offer of each of our academies is vital in providing an appropriate route through their educations for our students.

We focus on:
- Ensuring our academies meet **statutory requirements**
- **Developing Literacy and Numeracy**
- **Revising curriculum pathways** to ensure students receive the learning opportunities they need
- **Supporting vulnerable students** with a Thrive offer of alternative education and support
- **Developing Mastery curriculums in English and Mathematics**
- **Character Curriculum** provision via tutor and bespoke programmes to build student skills in self management and employability.
- Providing an internally accredited **Passport to Employability** – working with Enterprise Ambassadors linked to each academy through the Careers and Enterprise Company

Staff performance management – our staff are our most valuable resource but their performance management must connect to the outcomes their students achieve. See our Staff Development Handbook which details programmes and approaches.

We focus on:
- **Centralised management of documentation** – using Digital Career Development Pathway records and Professional Development Logs - feeding QA outcomes into a Personal Teacher Profile.
- **Performance Management targets** are linked to whole academy priorities and expected student outcomes
- **Pay progression** is clearly linked to performance
- **Providing clear and consistent feedback** to teachers on the quality of teaching
- **Personalising professional development** and creating Dynamic Career Pathways for all staff
- **Celebrating and rewarding good practice and success**

When we first work with an academy joining our Trust we recognise that a full review of staffing structures and individual staff capability and contribution is essential and we may need to identify staff which we need to **Remove**, staff who with support we seek to **Rescue** and staff who can motivate improvement who we seek to **Reward** with recognition and possible role changes.

Teaching – Planning, Leading and Assessing learning is central to academy success and at the heart of what we do.

We focus on:
- Clearly articulating to staff what **Quality First Teaching** looks like and what we expect to see in our classrooms
- **Developing teachers through coaching, mentoring, training, performance management and collaboration** with other schools, both within and outside of the Trust.

Relationships beyond the academy - connecting our academies to other institutions and organisations is key to broadening our offer to students and our perspectives of the wider world.

We focus on:
- **Building better relationships with parents and the local community**
- Entering into **formal partnerships** with other schools, colleges, HE and businesses
- Taking a role in **local decision making** forums and LA development groups

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT THROUGH COLLABORATION

Structured and regular meetings support collaboration across the Trust

LEADERSHIP

Purpose	Frequency	Members
Vision & Strategic Development	Termly	CEO - Trust Director – Executive Principal
Strategic Development	Half Termly	CEO – Trust Director - Principals
Direction of Working Groups	Half Termly	CEO – Working Group Leads
Termly Joint SLT Meetings – Strategic Priorities		
Termly Common Academy Meeting Night – Key Priority Development		
Common INSET/Twilight – Annual INSET Day		
Aligned Assessment Windows – Cross Trust Standardisation/Moderation		

WORKING GROUPS

Purpose	Frequency	Members
Continuing Professional Learning – including T&L	Half Termly	Executive Principal (Lead) Academy Leads Head of HR
Assessment and Curriculum	Half Termly	Nominated Chair Data Manager Academy Leads (Academy Exam and Assessment Support Staff)
Personal Development and CEIAG	Half Termly	Nominated Chair CEIAG Officer Academy Leads (House Leaders)
Behaviour and Attitudes	Half Termly	Nominated Chair Academy Leads (House Leaders)
IT Development	Half Termly	Nominated Chair IT Manager Academy Leads (IT Technicians – Academy Staff)
SEND	Half Termly	Nominated Chair Academy SEND Leads

(As needed)

Quality Assurance Schedule 2021/22	Refer to calendar for dates of meetings						
	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	Comments
Academic Standards							
Reports on academic standards and plans							
➢ Data profile	√		√			√	CEO / TD Report
➢ Attendance profile		√		√		√	CEO / TD Report
➢ Exclusions profile		√		√		√	CEO / TD Report
➢ Personal Development provision		√		√		√	CEO / TD Report
➢ Destinations/ Gatesby Benchmark profile		√		√		√	CEO / TD Report
QA Education provision							
➢ Leadership Review	**2 years or more frequently as needed**						Formal report to LGB/MAT
➢ Academy Review – annual	**Annual or more frequent as needed**						Formal report to LGB/MAT
➢ CPL Offer Review (Staff Development Handbook)		√		√		√	CEO / TD Report
➢ Examination Outcomes Review	√						Formal report to LGB/MAT
➢ Pupil Premium Review	**Annual or more frequent as needed**						Formal report to LGB/MAT
➢ SEND Review	**Annual or more frequent as needed**						Formal report to LGB/MAT
➢ Lesson Observation/ Learning Walk QA	**Twice yearly or more frequent as needed**						CEO / TD Report
➢ Curriculum Scrutiny/Remote Provision	**Annual or more frequent as needed**						Formal report to LGB/MAT
➢ Work Scrutiny	**Annual or more frequent as needed**						Performance Effectiveness Reports
➢ Student Voice – Learning/Behaviour/Welfare		√		√		√	CEO / TD Report
➢ Performance Effectiveness Review – subject/themed	**Annual or more frequent as needed**						Formal report to LGB/MAT
To receive the LGB annual plan (AIP) to raise standards in academies – termly review of progress		√		√		√	
Communications through KPIs – termly review of progress		√		√		√	

Additional Support to Core Service Functions which allow our Leaders to Focus on School Improvement

For all of our core services monthly reporting on activity and recommended actions is provided to Principals and the CEO and is reported termly to the Local Governing Board and MAT Board. Core service leaders meet monthly to plan and review provision.

Quality Assurance Activity	Autumn 21 – T1				Spring 222-T2				Summer 22– T3				Autumn 22 – T1			
	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Activity period for reporting																
Lesson Observations			√					√			√				√	
Scheme of Work Scrutiny											√					
Work Scrutiny				√				√		√						√
Student Voice – Learning / Behaviour / Welfare		√							√		√			√		
Quality of Teaching Environment			√				√		√						√	

Estates Service

Our Estates Manager leads and manages the site team based at each academy, ensuring development plans, monitoring and reporting are in place. Development work such as CIF bid writing and project management for the delivery of site developments is lead by the Estates Manager.
Services provided include:

Health & Safety
- Statutory duties
- Staff training and induction
- Fire assessment and test evacuations
- Compliance and auditing
- QA of accident reporting and investigation

Building and Management
- Safeguarding and Security Review
- Asset Management Audit
- Condition survey
- Environment QA
- Project Management

Financial Service

Our Finance Manager leads and manages a central team who support our academies with all finance functions centrally. The Finance Manager meets monthly with Principals and with key budget leaders as needed. Regular meetings with new budget holders also support the development of leaders in managing funds.
Services provided include:

Accounting Compliance
- Management Accounts and Monthly Accounts
- Salary Reconciliation and out turn statements
- External Auditor Visits
- Responsible Officer Visits

Accounting Strategic Planning
- Annual finance review

- Budget setting
- Staffing structure and annual review

General Data Protection Service

Our GDPR Compliance Officer provides training and information to academy staff and leaders. Review of policy and procedure and QA checks at each academy are supported. Management and reporting of potential or actual GDPR breach is managed by our officer.

Data Service

Our Data Manger liaises to support academy based data teams and works as part of an on-going data and assessment working group to support appropriate data handling and reporting in line with national and local changes in data reporting requirements. Heads of Faculty are provided with comprehensive data analysis after each data entry that allows them to focus on action planning. Services provided include:
- Data audit and reporting
- Data administration and reporting support

IT Service

Our IT Manager maintains an up to date knowledge of IT in education to support both learning and management, administration and data systems. He leads and manages IT Officers based in each academy.
Services provided include:
- GDPR, statutory compliance and policy renewal
- Project support and IT development
- Operational IT support

Human Resources Service

HR services are centralised and our HR manager leads a team of HR support staff.
Services provided include:
- Staffing structure reviews
- Compliance with employment law
- Appraisal and performance management support
- Recruitment services
- Training administration and support
- Staffing and workforce census returns
- Payroll administration
- HR Administration (Including contracts, holding all HR files, absence and SIMS personnel)
- Staff absence management
- Single Central Record completion

Our School Improvement Team Leads

Wendy Whelan – CEO (School Perfromance Lead)

Wendy has over 20 years experience at senior leadership level in secondary education. She joined UET in January 2016. Her previous role was as Executive Principal and Trust Director of a foundation trust (Derby Pride Trust) made up of a lead secondary school (where she was Executive Principal) - Good 2012), an AP Free School (developed under her leadership – Outstanding 2014), a 3-19 Special school (Outstanding 2016) and 7 primary schools (improved to 2 Outstanding and 5 Good by 2016).

Wendy also worked in supporting school improvement via Local Authority and Department for Education Pathfinder and Free School development work. Since 2015 she has also been a Pupil Premium Champion qualified in undertaking Ofsted directed Pupil Premium reviews. She has also chaired a number of Education-Business partnership groups in past roles, sits on SCC Schools Forum, SEND Governance Group and is an Associate for Entrust providing support for school improvement in Staffordshire.

Jamie Henshaw – Executive Principal (CPL Lead)

I am currently Executive Principal for Newcastle Academy and Sir Thomas Boughey Academy. I started teaching in 2003, originally a Drama teacher I have worked in schools across the midlands and I have 12 years' experience of leadership at a senior level. I have been fortunate enough to hold positions in leadership of curriculum areas, post 16, pastoral and teaching and learning. I have worked in a variety of schools that have all had their own challenges and enjoy the opportunity to be part of team working to bring about school improvement to provide the best for the young people that attend the provision.

I have a strong passion for school improvement and believe that no one should be left behind or not be given access to opportunities to further develop. In all my roles from an NQT to Principal I have always taken the same view that any decision made should always have the student at the centre and I am proud to be able to lead professional development for United Endeavour Trust as an Executive Principal.

Vickie Keeling – Trust Director (Core Service Performance Lead)

Vickie has a background in the construction industry and accounting she joined the education sector as a Finance Manager In 2006 and later took up post as a School Business Manager in 2008. She is experienced in overseeing improvement in all areas of core service provision and expert at driving up quality of service whilst securing improved value for money and efficiency. She has a track record of transforming deficit budgets to healthy surplus positions.
Vickie holds the post of Trust Director post and Estates Manager jointly.
She oversees Heads of Service in Estates, Finances, HR and IT. Vickie is a SLE and provides support to schools.

John Dooley – IT Manager

After studying Applied Computing Science and Physics at Keele/Staffordshire University, John obtained a BSc Hons in Computing Working for a number of academies in a senior role across two trusts covering the north west.   With 17 years' experience in the capacity of IT lead with the last 5 years developing strategic and operational IT service developments. United Endeavour Trust is one of the first trusts in the UK to be awarded Cyber Essentials as part of the DFE RPA pilot
John has also lead on with Microsoft Showcase incubator status across our trust, with a focus on quality first teaching and improving learning outcomes for students following the Microsoft Education Transformation Framework.

Matthew Tierney – Data Manager

Matthew began his career working for Michelin Tyres in Sales and Marketing. He left Michelin to undertake a Master's degree in Translation at Manchester University. Following this he worked in various data analyst roles, firstly in Insolvency and, following that, as a Business Analyst in Debt Recovery. He also worked in Logistics for New Look, in a Senior Analyst capacity. Taking his background as an analyst with strong data processing and IT skills set of experiences Matthew has been able to apply an objective look at school data management and use. He started working for Clayton Hall Academy as a Data Manager in May 2016 and became Head of Data for the Trust in the following October.

Shane Birchall – Finance Manager

After studying Accounting and Finance at Keele University, Shane started employment at accountancy firm RSM in the audit department. Working on a variety of audits, including large companies in the corporate sector as well as pension scheme clients. Completing further study to ACA accounting qualification and became a fully qualified accountant in 2016.

After six years at RSM, joining United Endeavour Trust as Head of Finance in January 2019. Leading the finance team in daily finance operations, and I am responsible for compliance with external accounting and audit requirements.

Sarah Rowell – Head of Human Resources

Sarah joined Clayton Hall Academy as Finance Officer in 2009 following a 23-year career in the banking sector. After 3 years Sarah took on the responsibility of HR in conjunction with her Finance role. Promoted further to Deputy Business Manager prior to Trust conversion. On Trust conversion in 2017 moving to the specialist role of Head of HR and has since gained CIPD Level 3 & 5 qualifications in this area. In support of her role Sarah has become an Adult Mental Health First Aider and carries out continuous research to support Trust employees.

Sarah works closely with Jamie Henshaw leading professional development with particular focus on the development of support staff across the Trust.

Rebecca Carter – CEIAG Officer

I have worked at Sir Thomas Boughey Academy since 2014. As part of my role in the pastoral team there, I thoroughly enjoyed arranging careers events, trips and activities. In 2019, I was delighted to take up the role as trust wide Careers Officer. I am now working hard alongside our teams of Careers Leaders, Careers Link Governors and Enterprise Advisors as well as the Careers and Enterprise Company to continually improve our schools' careers programmes and work towards fully meeting

the eight Gatsby benchmarks in each school. I also provide independent careers advice to students and parents and am always more than happy to help former students.