



## The Societas Trust

### Growth Plan

#### **Statement of Growth**

The Societas Trust is committed to developing mutually beneficial, local partnerships with individual settings and other Multi Academy Trusts.

Effective collaboration can create purposeful and impactful partnerships that lead to improvements in children's outcomes and effective use of resources. We believe that meaningful collaboration can have a valuable impact upon our trusts self-improving school system, enabling us:

- to understand the strengths and weaknesses of our own settings;
- to generate a culture of ongoing challenge and support between professionals;
- to reflect on relevant research and evidence;
- to share professional perspectives;
- to develop leadership;
- to deploy people with the right expertise strategically to achieve improvements;
- to work together towards identifying solutions to common challenges;
- to ensure financial viability and sustainability (allowing cost effective services to settings, maximising resources to increase the quality of provision);
- to foster an inspiring and collective vision for the local area and the education system as a whole.

Our plans for growth are to work in collaboration with like-minded organisations, including both 'Good' and 'Outstanding' academies/schools, whilst also developing our capacity to support those schools that require additional capacity to improve outcomes for learners.

The Trust will build on existing partnerships, which have been underpinned by trust, mutual respect, a shared ethos and a history of the setting/organisation being committed to the communities they serve.

## Growth through Collaboration

Collaboration with others may take various forms:

1. Informal collaboration that grows capacity and ensures our Trust remains outward looking, reflective, innovative and self-improving:

This will be achieved through the creation of network groups (e.g. – governors, leaders, curriculum leaders etc.) who share a commitment to regular and routine partnership working and/or peer review, with a view to sharing outcomes with others in the schools' system. These networks will be committed to research based school improvement principles and practices allowing each member to contribute to and benefit from the membership.

Types of collaboration include:

- Good practice visits;
- Joint projects;
- sharing and moderating at least some of the outcomes with others;
- Joint CPD;
- Peer review with other settings/MATs etc.;
- Activity with other professionals/agencies;

Any costs incurred will be shared across the participating settings/organisations – according to size of setting/organisation.

2. Formal collaboration and growth through shared strategies for school improvement, where innovation and collaboration influence outcomes for children. At this level, a collaboration agreement with timelines & financial details would be in place.

This level of collaboration may include (list is not exhaustive):

- Harmonisation of statutory policies and procedures;
- Harmonisation of governance structures – e.g. shadow arrangements (LGB and Trustees);
- Joint procurement;
- Shared recruitment and retention plans;
- Shared back office functions and resources; thus maximising services and creating efficiencies etc.

3. Formal collaboration that results in the expansion of the Trust

This level would be by mutual agreement following a rigorous due diligence process (Appendix 2).

Underpinning all levels of collaboration is a commitment to respect each other's ethos and values at all times; promoting the good working relationships of the parties whenever and wherever possible. The underpinning values are rooted in honesty, transparency and mutual respect.

### **Growth Planning**

Carefully planned growth of The Societas Trust will build on existing good practice, always ensuring that there is sufficient infrastructure to ensure effective:

- Collaboration;
- Educational improvement support;
- Back-office support.

When considering expansion of the Trust we consider:

- Moral obligation (raise standards and address underperformance with no detrimental impact on existing pupils);
- Size of setting / organisation and designation;
- Financial position of setting / organisation;
- Distance between settings / organisations;
- Ofsted category of the setting(s).

Our intention and ambition is to create a network of outstanding settings that thrive through collaboration and interaction. We will only expand when we have the capacity to do so, with our existing settings being in a strong position. It is the responsibility of the Trust to build capacity as it develops and not do anything that would be detrimental to any young person, staff or school in a neighbouring community. We will use the South West MAT Improvement

Capacity Framework to support our understanding of our current capacity to support and drive school improvement (Appendix 1). This allows us to build and strengthen our current capacity and potentially to grow our capacity to support more schools.

Any new setting / organisation wishing to join the Trust will be carefully scrutinised through a documented due diligence process involving a review of finance, achievement, staffing, health & safety and facilities (Appendix 2). Trustees will monitor progress and regularly review what needs to happen to support settings / organisations further.

### **Education Improvement Strategy**

Our education improvement strategy reflects the clear vision and values of The Societas Trust in ensuring 'Great Learning Opportunities for All'. Our Trust works within the context of earned autonomy, shared decision making and structured school to school support. Our focus is on supporting continuous improvement and the pursuit of excellence for all within the Trust. Our approach recognises that each academy has important complementary roles in securing this excellence, and that the sharing of strengths across the Trust which, combined with a shared intolerance of underachievement, will lead to improved educational outcomes for all children served by Societas.

### **Education Improvement Capacity**

Our aim is to have expertise in all areas of school improvement, and to have plans for succession in place. Most school improvement capacity comes from our settings, with leaders supporting colleagues within and beyond their own setting.

As a Trust, we have built a team of Senior Leaders and Outstanding Practitioners (including NLEs/LLEs/SLEs) who are deployed by our Executive Team. The Directors' Board and Trust Education Partner oversees the quality and impact of the improving education work via the Academy Performance Review (APR) Process.

### **Working Groups / Sub-Groups**

A key feature of the leadership of our school improvement are our trust-wide Working Groups / Sub-groups. These teams have leaders from each of our settings, from subject areas or phases, who are charged with developing the best learning experiences using external expertise where appropriate.

The blend of experienced leaders with new leaders enables professional learning and sharing that supports all of our schools.

Each team is led by an experienced leader. The teams share approaches with subjects, so that leaders and teachers can learn from and offer challenge and support to one another coming from a variety of different contexts within the Trust, be it through joint moderation, curriculum material development, or, indeed, supporting leadership where a gap has emerged, thereby mitigating standards risks across the Trust. The teams develop best practice and also share expertise across and beyond our schools and academies.

We intend, as we grow, to develop, over the next three years, adding greater capacity in the School Improvement Team, whilst ensuring that this is predominantly school led. The APR process led by our Trust Education Partner quality assures this work.

### **Outstanding Practitioners/NLEs/LLEs/SLEs**

A team of outstanding practitioners underpin and sustain the high quality education for all trust settings. They are experienced staff with leadership and mentoring skills. They have the ability to work with staff to identify their needs and support their development. They analyse student data, agree areas for improvement and introduce the skillsets and techniques required to have a real impact in the classroom. Outstanding Practitioners usually have a particular areas of focus such as English, Mathematics, Science, Teacher Training, Family Support, SEND etc.

### **Professional Development Opportunities**

All settings in the Trust and in collaboration with the trust benefit from CPD programmes for both teaching staff, support staff and governors at every level. This enable the Trust to support the professional development for staff at every career stage: NQT, RQT, middle leaders, aspirant senior leaders, Head Teachers and governors etc.

### **Business Support Services**

This includes legal, financial, HR, PR, MIS and marketing support. These combined functions will ensure that all settings enjoy excellent value for money. Competitive contracting and procurement across the Trust will enable considerable savings. Our recruitment and retention strategy strives to attract the best staff but also ensure that they stay to develop their career within the trust.