



Department  
for Education

# **National Professional Qualification (NPQ): Executive Leadership Framework**

**October 2020**

## Acknowledgements

The National Professional Qualification Frameworks were developed in consultation with the following members of an Expert Advisory Group<sup>1</sup> and in collaboration with a wide range of teachers, school leaders, academics and experts:

Ian Bauckham	Tenax Schools Trust
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Richard Gill	Teaching Schools Council
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Cat Scutt	Chartered College of Teaching
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A wider advisory group of individuals and organisations have provided further support and challenge during the framework drafting process. Alongside DfE officials, Matthew Hood took a lead role in supporting the drafting process.

The content of the framework and its underpinning evidence have been independently assessed and endorsed by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF).



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<sup>1</sup> The group was established in July 2019. Marie Hamer, Malcolm Trobe and Ian Bauckham joined the group in April 2020. As of July 2020, the group's membership and remit have expanded to cover the Early Career Framework (ECF).

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# Summary

## About this guidance

This publication provides guidance from the Department for Education (DfE). It sets out the knowledge, skills and behaviours that will be developed by school leaders when they participate in the National Professional Qualification for Executive Leadership (NPQEL).

## Who is this guidance for?

This guidance is for:

- school leaders who are applying for, participating in, or encouraging staff to undertake this NPQ
- organisations developing and delivering NPQs.

# Introduction

## **Transforming the support and development offer for teachers and school leaders throughout their career**

Great teaching and great school leadership are the foundations of a world-class education system. At the heart of great teaching and great school leadership is a shared, evidence-informed understanding of what works.

Delivering on the commitments set out in the [Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy](#), we have transformed our training and support for teachers at all stages of their career.

We have revised our Initial Teacher Training (ITT) Core Content Framework and, through the implementation of the Early Career Framework (ECF), are now supporting teachers in the first years of their career with a structured two year induction into the profession.

Building on this, our priority is to help all our teachers and school leaders to continuously develop their knowledge and skills throughout their careers so every child in every classroom in every school gets a world-class start in life.

The National Professional Qualifications (NPQs) provide training and support for teachers and school leaders at all levels, from those who want to develop expertise in high quality teaching practice, such as behaviour management, to those leading multiple schools across trusts.

The NPQ frameworks continue the robust method of design and development, building on the evidence base and expert guidance already established in the ECF and the ITT Core Content Framework. They complete the golden thread, running from initial teacher training through to school leadership, rooting teacher and school leader development in the best available evidence and collective wisdom of the profession.

The frameworks reflect the [Teachers' Standards](#) and [Headteachers' Standards](#) to ensure coherency with the requirements already used by the teaching profession.

## **The suite of National Professional Qualifications**

NPQs are a set of prestigious professional qualifications, already widely recognised by the sector. They are voluntary and are designed to support the professional development of teachers and school leaders at all levels, across primary and secondary schools.

Three existing NPQs in Senior Leadership, Headship and Executive Leadership have been reformed to ensure they are underpinned by the latest and best evidence, and

reflect the new Headteachers' Standards. Our NPQ in Middle Leadership has been replaced with three new NPQs for teachers and school leaders who want to broaden and deepen their expertise in specialist areas.

The NPQs comprise the:

- **National Professional Qualification for Leading Teacher Development (NPQLTD)** – for teachers who have, or are aspiring to have, responsibilities for leading the development of other teachers in their school. They may have responsibilities for the development of all teachers across a school or specifically trainees or teachers who are early in their career.
- **National Professional Qualification for Leading Behaviour and Culture (NPQLBC)** – for teachers who have, or are aspiring to have, responsibilities for leading behaviour and/or supporting pupil wellbeing in their school.
- **National Professional Qualification for Leading Teaching (NPQLT)** – for teachers who have, or are aspiring to have, responsibilities for leading teaching in a subject, year group, key stage or phase.
- **National Professional Qualification for Senior Leadership (NPQSL)** – for school leaders who are, or are aspiring to be, a senior leader with cross-school responsibilities.
- **National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH)** – for school leaders who are, or are aspiring to be, a headteacher or head of school with responsibility for leading a school.
- **National Professional Qualification for Executive Leadership (NPQEL)** – for school leaders who are, or are aspiring to be, an executive headteacher or have a school trust CEO role with responsibility for leading several schools.

## **Reforming the National Professional Qualification content frameworks**

In collaboration with an Expert Advisory Group, we consulted extensively with the sector to design the reformed suite of NPQs. This has included invaluable input from teachers, school and trust leaders, academics and experts.

The frameworks set out two types of content. Within each area, key evidence statements (“Learn that...”) have been drawn from current high-quality evidence from the UK and overseas. This evidence includes high-quality reviews and syntheses, including meta-analyses and rigorous individual studies. In addition, the NPQ frameworks provide practical guidance on the skills that teachers and school/trust leaders should be

supported to develop. Practice statements (“Learn how to...”) draw on both the best available educational research and on additional guidance from the Expert Advisory Group and other sector representatives.

The NPQs seek to support every school leader to ensure that their leadership enables all pupils to succeed. This includes those pupils identified within the four areas of need set out in the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) code of practice, and children in need of help and protection as identified in the Children in Need Review.

The EEF has independently reviewed the frameworks to ensure they draw on the best available evidence and that this evidence has been interpreted with fidelity. References for evidence underpinning each section are provided at the end of the framework.

The NPQ frameworks have also been reviewed by a wide range of sector bodies including unions, special educational needs and disability experts and governance experts.

### **The role of executive leader**

Leading across a group of schools is complex. Executive leaders are typically responsible for several schools located on different sites either as a cluster within a larger trust or as a trust themselves. Their work is overwhelmingly strategic and relies on working with and through their colleagues (in particular, through senior colleagues) to ensure every pupil gets an excellent education.

Although many executive leaders work in multi-academy trusts (MATs), there are also those that lead federations and other groups of schools. The term ‘trust’ or ‘school trust’ is used throughout the framework to refer to the governance of a group of schools, however, it is recognised that there are other groupings of schools other than multi-academy trusts.

Those in this role need to have a strong understanding of their context, communities and the pupils and adults they work with. They also need to have depth of expertise across a number of specialist areas related to their role (e.g. curriculum and assessment, organisational management, governance and accountability) and in approaches that, through working with their colleagues, enable their trust to keep improving (e.g. professional development and implementation). They must understand the relationship between these different domains, how they can change over time, how to set an ambitious vision for their school trust and the schools within it, and how to establish the culture and conditions across the trust in which staff and pupils are able to thrive.

That means developing expertise in executive leadership is also complex. This framework is a codification of essential knowledge, skills and concepts that underpin

successful leadership of a school/trust. It sets out what those leading across a trust should know and be able to do within the specialist areas related to their role and in relation to approaches that enable their trust to keep improving.

Providers of this qualification will design a curriculum that draws on and blends together sections from across this framework with the professional standards that sit alongside it, and which is responsive to the needs of the participants who are taking the course.

The course curriculum should aim to develop expertise that is flexible and allows participants to respond to the challenges they will encounter in a range of contexts. It should develop expertise that can be applied to both identifying and addressing persistent and common challenges in school leadership. It should also provide fellow professionals with a network, common language and access to a continuous debate through which the collective expertise of our education system can grow and develop.

### **Updating the National Professional Qualification content frameworks**

The NPQ frameworks will be kept under review as the evidence base evolves. As in any profession, the evidence base is not static and research insights develop and progress.





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# National Professional Qualification (NPQ): Executive Leadership

A qualification for school leaders who are, or are aspiring to be, an executive headteacher or have a school trust CEO role with responsibility for leading several schools.

## One – Trust Culture

Learn that...	Learn how to...
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. High-quality teaching has a long-term positive effect on pupils' life chances, particularly for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.</li> <li>2. Teacher expectations can affect pupil outcomes; setting goals that challenge and stretch pupils is essential.</li> <li>3. Setting clear expectations can help communicate shared values that improve classroom and school culture.</li> <li>4. Teachers have the ability to affect and improve the wellbeing, motivation and behaviour of their pupils.</li> <li>5. Teachers are key role models, who can influence the attitudes, values and behaviours of their pupils.</li> <li>6. Teachers can influence pupils' resilience and beliefs about their ability to succeed, by ensuring all pupils have the opportunity to experience meaningful success.</li> <li>7. A culture of mutual trust and respect between colleagues fosters effective relationships and supportive professional environments.</li> <li>8. Building alignment of staff around the intended trust culture can create coherence in a trust and give direction and purpose to the staff's work teaching pupils.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Establish and sustain the trust's strategic direction, with those responsible for governance, including by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using a range of data, the expertise of the trust's headteachers, other colleagues and experience of the wider community in its creation and ongoing refinement.</li> <li>• Ensuring the strategic direction sets ambitious standards for all pupils.</li> <li>• Regularly communicating this strategic direction to the whole trust community, particularly through the school leaders and the senior trust team.</li> <li>• Ensuring all aspects of the trust's approach to continuous improvement are aligned to each other and around this strategic direction.</li> <li>• Paying particular attention to securing alignment between curriculum, assessment and teaching, and of these to the trust's ambitious goals for its pupils.</li> </ul> <p><b>Establish and sustain an effective culture across the trust, including by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Articulating, modelling and rehearsing practices that contribute to the intended trust culture and supporting every member of the trust community, particularly school leaders</li> </ul>

	<p>and the senior trust team, to do the same.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Encouraging schools to prioritise the use of intentional and consistent language that promotes challenge, aspiration and high expectations for pupils; and professional development and high professional standards for all colleagues.</li><li>● Implementing and monitoring the effects of trust policies to create an environment for pupils and colleagues where everyone feels welcome, safe, and able to learn from mistakes.</li></ul>
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## Two – Teaching

Learn that...	Learn how to...
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Learning involves a lasting change in pupils' capabilities or understanding.</li> <li>2. Effective teaching can transform pupils' knowledge, capabilities and beliefs about learning.</li> <li>3. Paired and group activities can increase pupil success, but to work together effectively pupils need guidance, support and practice.</li> <li>4. How pupils are grouped is also important; care should be taken to monitor the impact of groupings on pupil attainment, behaviour and motivation.</li> <li>5. Homework can improve pupil outcomes, particularly for older pupils, but it is likely that the quality of homework and its relevance to main class teaching is more important than the amount set.</li> <li>6. Prior knowledge plays an important role in how pupils learn; committing some key facts to their long-term memory is likely to help pupils learn more complex ideas.</li> <li>7. An important factor in learning is memory, which can be thought of as comprising two elements: working memory and long-term memory.</li> <li>8. Working memory is where information that is being actively processed is held, but its capacity is limited and can be overloaded.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Establish and sustain effective planning and preparation across the trust, including by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Supporting school leaders and the senior trust team to implement an evidence-informed approach to curriculum design including thoughtful sequencing of concepts and use of retrieval and spaced practice.</li> <li>● Ensuring that colleagues have access to high quality examples of lesson plans across multiple subjects that demonstrate effective approaches.</li> <li>● Ensuring that high quality unit and lesson planning is shared across trust schools.</li> </ul> <p><b>Ensure teaching across the trust includes effective explanations and modelling, including by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Providing and resourcing opportunities for more experienced teachers to share subject specific examples of effective explanations and modelling with less experienced teachers, including across trust schools.</li> <li>● Working closely with school leaders and the senior trust team to ensure that teachers have access to high quality subject specific materials and training that demonstrate how to explain and model effectively.</li> </ul>

9. Long-term memory can be considered as a store of knowledge that changes as pupils learn by integrating new ideas with existing knowledge.
10. Where prior knowledge is weak, pupils are more likely to develop misconceptions, particularly if new ideas are introduced too quickly.
11. Regular purposeful practice of what has previously been taught can help consolidate material and help pupils remember what they have learned.
12. Requiring pupils to retrieve information from memory, and spacing practice so that pupils revisit ideas after a gap, are also likely to strengthen recall.
13. Worked examples that take pupils through each step of a new process are also likely to support pupils to learn.
14. Effective teachers introduce new material in steps, explicitly linking new ideas to what has been previously studied and learned.
15. Modelling helps pupils understand new processes and ideas; good models make abstract ideas concrete and accessible.
16. Guides, scaffolds and worked examples can help pupils apply new ideas, but should be gradually removed as pupil expertise increases.
17. Explicitly teaching pupils metacognitive strategies linked to subject knowledge, including how to plan, monitor and evaluate, supports independence and academic success.
18. Questioning is an essential tool for teachers; questions can be used for many purposes, including to check pupils' prior

**Ensure teaching across the trust stimulates pupil thinking and understanding, including by:**

- Ensuring that school leaders create time for teachers to identify what they want pupils to think hard about and focus lesson time around these areas.
- Support school leaders and the senior trust team to develop whole school approaches that promote effective classroom discussion and literacy development (for example, by training staff to use a range of question types to improve the quality of class discussions, scaffold pupil discussion to increase the focus and rigour of dialogue and, consider the factors that will support effective collaborative or paired work).

knowledge, assess understanding and break down problems.

19. High-quality classroom discussion can support pupils to articulate key ideas, consolidate understanding and extend their vocabulary.
20. Practice is an integral part of effective teaching; ensuring pupils have repeated opportunities to practise, with appropriate guidance and support, increases success.

## Three – Curriculum and Assessment

Learn that...	Learn how to...
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A school’s curriculum enables it to set out the knowledge, skills and values that its pupils will learn, encompassing the national curriculum within a coherent wider vision for successful learning.</li> <li>2. School subjects are their own distinct disciplines which have reference points in disciplines and practices beyond the school.</li> <li>3. The potential content of many subjects (especially literature, humanities and arts) is contestable and requires thoughtful, sustained review and engagement with that subject discipline.</li> <li>4. Secure subject knowledge helps teachers to motivate pupils and teach effectively.</li> <li>5. Ensuring pupils master foundational concepts and knowledge before moving on is likely to build pupils’ confidence and help them succeed.</li> <li>6. Anticipating common misconceptions within particular subjects is also an important aspect of curricular knowledge; working closely with colleagues to develop an understanding of likely misconceptions is valuable.</li> <li>7. Explicitly teaching pupils the knowledge and skills they need to succeed within particular subject areas is beneficial.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Support colleagues across the trust to design a carefully sequenced, broad and coherent curricula, including by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Valuing, developing and working with and through key staff (particularly those with subject expertise) to support curriculum development to ensure that important knowledge, skills and concepts are identified and taught, and that these subject specific components, and common misconceptions, are revisited multiple times.</li> <li>● Ensuring that school leaders, the senior trust team and any trust curriculum leads provide opportunities for colleagues to reflect on their teaching and to share powerful analogies, illustrations, examples, explanations and demonstrations for colleagues to use in their teaching.</li> <li>● Protecting curriculum development time in the interests of sustained, critical and rigorous curriculum improvement.</li> </ul> <p><b>Support colleagues across the trust to develop pupils’ literacy, including by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Clearly communicating the expectation that trust schools use systematic synthetic phonics, when teaching early reading phonics.</li> <li>● Enabling and ensuring that whole school literacy strategies are in place and that these include best practice in literacy</li> </ul>

<p>8. In order for pupils to think critically, they must have a secure understanding of knowledge within the subject area they are being asked to think critically about.</p> <p>9. In all subject areas, pupils learn new ideas by linking those ideas to existing knowledge, organising this knowledge into increasingly complex mental models (or “schemata”); carefully sequencing teaching to facilitate this process is important.</p> <p>10. Pupils are likely to struggle to transfer what has been learnt in one discipline to a new or unfamiliar context.</p> <p>11. To access the curriculum, early literacy provides fundamental knowledge; reading comprises two elements: word reading and language comprehension; systematic synthetic phonics is the most effective approach for teaching pupils to decode.</p> <p>12. Every teacher can improve pupils’ literacy, including by explicitly teaching reading, writing and oral language skills specific to individual disciplines.</p> <p>13. Effective assessment is critical to teaching because it provides teachers with information about pupils’ understanding and needs.</p> <p>14. Good assessment helps teachers avoid being over-influenced by potentially misleading factors, such as how busy pupils appear.</p> <p>15. Before using any assessment, teachers should be clear about the decision it will be used to support and be able to justify its use.</p>	<p>provision; including aspects of reading comprehension, vocabulary instruction, classroom talk and writing support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Promoting the importance of domain and contextual knowledge and the role of foundation subjects in supporting reading.</li> </ul> <p><b>Ensure trust schools provide high-quality feedback, including by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ensuring that feedback policies are clear and that teachers are provided with guidance and training so that feedback is specific and supportive.</li> <li>● Encouraging and facilitating the sharing and reflection of effective and time-efficient feedback policies and approaches between schools.</li> </ul> <p><b>Ensure colleagues across the trust have assessment processes that are high quality and as reliable as possible without creating unnecessary workload, including by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Confirming that assessment and data collection practices guarantee that assessments are readily available, of high quality, externally validated where available, and factored into curriculum planning</li> <li>● Ensuring that any feedback policies do not create excessive workload for colleagues and that they provide clear advice on strategies that make marking more effective and efficient.</li> <li>● Providing appropriate guidance and training on the</li> </ul>
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<p>16. To be of value, teachers use information from assessments to inform the decisions they make; in turn, pupils must be able to act on feedback for it to have an effect.</p> <p>17. High-quality feedback can be written or verbal; it is likely to be accurate and clear, encourage further effort, and provide specific guidance on how to improve.</p> <p>18. Over time, feedback should support pupils to monitor and regulate their own learning.</p> <p>19. Working with colleagues to identify efficient approaches to assessment is important; assessment can become onerous and have a disproportionate impact on workload.</p>	<p>successful application of school feedback policies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Making certain that testing/examinations policies, processes and systems are transparent, fair and compliant with any external requirements.</li></ul>
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## Four – Behaviour

Learn that...	Learn how to...
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. While classroom-level strategies have a big impact on pupil behaviour, consistency and coherence at a whole school level are paramount.</li> <li>2. Whole school changes usually take longer to embed than individually tailored or single-classroom approaches however, behaviour programmes are more likely to have an impact on attainment outcomes if implemented at a whole school level.</li> <li>3. Teacher and pupil behaviours become ingrained and can be difficult to change, so most whole school behaviour policy or practice will likely take more than a school term to demonstrate impact</li> <li>4. Some teachers will benefit from intensive support to improve their classroom management.</li> <li>5. Despite consistent systems being beneficial for all pupils, universal behaviour systems are unlikely to meet the needs of all pupils all of the time. If pupils need more intensive support with their behaviour, the approach may need to be adapted to individual needs.</li> <li>6. SENCOs, pastoral leaders and other specialist colleagues also have valuable expertise and can ensure that appropriate support is in place for pupils.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Ensure that trust schools establish and sustain a positive, predictable and safe environment for pupils, including by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Supporting each school to have a predictable, whole school approach to recognition, rules and sanctions that is built on good relationships between pupils and staff, complements the intended school culture and includes a clear approach to escalation of behaviour incidents.</li> <li>● Using feedback and data from across the trust to continuously refine and improve the approach of every school, prioritising those with the greatest need of support.</li> </ul> <p><b>Ensure staff can create a positive, predictable and safe environment in their classrooms, including by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Requiring school leaders and the senior trust team to consistently explain the importance of rigorously maintaining clear behavioural expectations.</li> <li>● Developing and implementing systems to check that every school responds consistently to pupil behaviour through thoughtful application of recognition, rules and sanctions, and that follow-up actions are taken where issues are identified.</li> </ul>

7. Teaching model behaviours will reduce the need to manage misbehaviour.
8. Teachers should encourage pupils to be self-reflective of their own behaviour.
9. Establishing and reinforcing routines, including through positive reinforcement, can help create an effective learning environment.
10. A predictable and secure environment benefits all pupils, but is particularly valuable for pupils with special educational needs.
11. The ability to self-regulate one's emotions affects pupils' ability to learn, success in school and future lives.
12. Building effective relationships is easier when pupils believe that their feelings will be considered and understood.
13. Pupils are motivated by intrinsic factors (related to their identity and values) and extrinsic factors (related to reward).
14. Pupils' investment in learning is also driven by their prior experiences and perceptions of success and failure.
15. Building effective relationships with parents, carers and families can improve pupils' motivation, behaviour and academic success.
16. Pupil behaviour has multiple influences, some of which teachers can manage directly
17. While every person's behaviour and their motivations for it are complex and unique, the age of pupils, or their

**Support staff to motivate pupils, including by:**

- Working with school leaders and the senior trust team to ensure that curriculum and extra-curricular activities relate to pupils' aspirations and long-term goals.

**Create and oversee an approach that ensures all trust schools assist pupils who need more intensive support with their behaviour, including by:**

- Ensuring systems are in place so that staff are supported to liaise with parents, carers and colleagues to better understand pupils' individual circumstances, and how they can be supported to meet high academic and behavioural expectations.
- Ensuring that policies and regulations relating to SEND (including reasonable adjustments), looked after children, children who have a social worker, safeguarding and exclusions are well implemented and continuously improved.
- Ensuring that all schools have processes that support staff to access, select, adapt and consistently use targeted, age/developmentally appropriate interventions without lowering expectations of any pupil's behaviour (e.g. functional behavioural assessment interventions and daily report cards).

**Ensure that all trust schools have effective policies and practices to prevent and respond to bullying, including by:**

actual stage of development, can affect their behaviour in ways that are predictable.

18. Understanding a pupil's context will inform effective responses to complex behaviour or misbehaviour.
19. There are influences on behaviour which teaching staff can affect directly, others where there is a potential for teaching staff to influence or advise, and a third category where influences may be outside the purview of teaching staff.
20. Pupils who need a tailored approach to support their behaviour do not necessarily have a special educational need and children with special educational needs and disabilities will not necessarily need additional support with their behaviour.
21. A key influence on a child's behaviour in school is being the victim of bullying. As well as causing stress for the pupil, being bullied is linked to lower attainment and longer-term health and prosperity outcomes.

- Ensuring that each school has a proactive whole school anti-bullying approach that includes effective approaches (for example, prevention work or approaches that encourage pupils to empathise with others), and that effective practices are shared across the trust.
- Ensuring school leaders and the senior trust team have a clear strategy on how this whole school anti-bullying approach is communicated clearly and consistently to pupils, parents/carers, colleagues and the wider community.

## Five – Additional and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Learn that...	Learn how to...
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The SEND Code of Practice (2015) and Equality Act (2010) state that all children and young people are entitled to an appropriate education, one that is appropriate to their needs, promotes high standards and the fulfilment of potential.</li> <li>2. The SEND Code of Practice sets out four areas of need (communication and interaction; cognition and learning; social, emotional and mental health difficulties; and physical and/or sensory needs). Considering these primary needs is a useful first step, but a more detailed understanding of an individual pupil is required for action to be beneficial.</li> <li>3. Pupils with special educational needs or disabilities are likely to require additional or adapted support; working closely with colleagues, families and pupils to understand barriers and identify effective strategies is essential.</li> <li>4. Adapting teaching in a responsive way, including by providing targeted support to pupils who are struggling, is likely to increase pupil success.</li> <li>5. Pupils are likely to learn at different rates and to require different levels and types of support from teachers to succeed.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Ensure all pupils experience success, including by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ensuring that all trust schools, headteachers and staff fulfil statutory duties with regard to the SEND Code of Practice (2015) and Equality Act (2010).</li> <li>● Ensuring teaching assistants and other professionals across trust schools are deployed in a targeted way, rather than as a replacement for high-quality teaching.</li> <li>● Developing policies, processes and systems that enable and encourage collaboration between staff within and across trust schools to share examples of how to adapt lessons, while maintaining high expectations for all, so that all pupils can experience success.</li> <li>● Developing and monitoring policies, processes and systems across the trust so that staff in all schools can adapt lessons, make reasonable adjustments and implement structured academic or behavioural interventions, which are well-matched to pupils' needs, before seeking a diagnosis or specialist support through the graduated approach as defined within the SEND Code of Practice.</li> <li>● Ensuring all trust schools have access to specialist support when teaching children with special educational needs and disabilities.</li> </ul>

6. Seeking to understand pupils' differences, including their different levels of prior knowledge and potential barriers to learning, is an essential part of teaching.
7. Adaptive teaching is less likely to be valuable if it causes the teacher to artificially create distinct tasks for different groups of pupils or to set lower expectations for particular pupils.
8. Flexibly grouping pupils within a class to provide more tailored support can be effective, but care should be taken to monitor its impact on engagement and motivation, particularly for low attaining pupils.
9. There is a common misconception that pupils have distinct and identifiable learning styles. This is not supported by evidence and attempting to tailor lessons to learning styles is unlikely to be beneficial.

**Ensure that all trust schools have the appropriate support to meet individual needs without creating unnecessary workload, including by:**

- Ensuring staff have access to, and implement, well-designed curricula, textbooks and other resources.
- Encouraging school leaders and senior trust teams to use evidence-informed approaches for intervention with individuals and small groups rather than planning different lessons for different groups of pupils or taking pupils out of classrooms for interventions during lessons.

**Ensure all trust schools group pupils effectively (across subjects and within individual classrooms), including by:**

- Advising school leaders on how to support staff to maintain high expectations for all groups, and ensuring all pupils have access to a rich curriculum.
- Monitoring grouping practices across the trust to ensure that interventions are effective, and school leaders and line managers are clear that any groups based on attainment should be subject specific, and pupils do not have the perception that these groups are fixed.

## Six – Professional Development

Learn that...	Learn how to...
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Helping teachers improve through evidence-based professional development that is explicitly focused on improving classroom teaching can be a cost-effective way to improve pupils' academic outcomes when compared with other interventions, and can narrow the disadvantage attainment gap.</li> <li>2. Effective professional development is likely to involve a lasting change in teachers' capabilities or understanding so that their teaching changes.</li> <li>3. Professional development should be developed using a clear theory of change, where facilitators understand what the intended educational outcomes for teachers are and how these will subsequently impact pupil outcomes. Ideally, they should check whether teachers learn what was intended.</li> <li>4. Whilst professional development may need to be sustained over time, what the time is used for is more important than the amount.</li> <li>5. More effective professional development is likely to be designed to build on the existing knowledge, skills and understanding of participants.</li> <li>6. The content of professional development programmes should be based on the best available evidence on effective pedagogies and classroom interventions and</li> </ol>	<p><b>Ensure that all trust schools support colleagues to engage in effective professional development, including by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Working with school leaders and the senior trust team to ensure professional development priorities are aligned with wider trust improvement priorities and focussing on a shared responsibility for improving outcomes for all pupils.</li> <li>● Enabling the use of well-designed frameworks and resources (e.g. sources of subject knowledge, the Early Career Framework and associated core induction programme for early career teachers, ITT Core Content Framework, suite of National Professional Qualifications).</li> <li>● Making sure that the trust has teams of colleagues across schools who can facilitate a range of professional development approaches.</li> <li>● Working with school leaders and senior trust teams to ensure that teachers across the trust are able to continually develop specialist subject, phase and domain expertise.</li> <li>● Ensuring that trust schools make reasonable adjustments that are well-matched to teacher needs (e.g. in content, resources and venue).</li> <li>● Ensuring policies, processes and systems make certain that professional development time is used productively and is perceived as relevant by all colleagues.</li> </ul>

aim to enhance capabilities and understanding in order to improve pupil outcomes.

7. Teachers are more likely to improve if they feel that they are working within a supportive professional environment, where both trust and high professional standards are maintained.
8. Supportive environments include having the time and resource to undertake relevant professional development and collaborate with peers, and the provision of feedback to enable teachers to improve. They also include receiving support from school leadership, both in addressing concerns and in maintaining standards for pupil behaviour.
9. Teaching quality is a crucial factor in raising pupil attainment.
10. Professional development is likely to be more effective when design and delivery involves specialist expertise from a range of sources. This may include internal or external expertise.
11. Teacher developers should choose approaches that suit the aims and context of their professional development programme. Successful models have included regular, expert-led conversations about classroom practice, teacher development groups, and structured interventions. However, these activities do not work in all circumstances and the model should fit the educational aims, content and context of the programme.

- Working closely with school leaders and the senior trust team to develop, implement and monitor a trust wide approach that ensures early career teachers access their statutory entitlements and that the Early Career Framework, the ITT Core Content Framework, the Teachers' Standards and the Standard for Teachers' Professional Development inform the trust's training and induction offers.
- Ensuring that the professional environment for staff is supportive with sufficient time for high-quality dialogue and collaboration.

**Conduct, and support school leaders and the senior trust team to conduct, regular expert-led conversations (which could be referred to as mentoring or coaching) about all aspects of running the trust or a school, including by:**

- Building a relationship of trust and mutual respect between the colleagues involved in the conversation.
- Tailoring the conversation to the expertise and needs of the individual (e.g. adapting conversations to be more or less facilitative, dialogic or directive).
- Using approaches including observations of activities (e.g. teaching, presenting) or artefacts (e.g. assessment materials, curriculum plans, draft budgets, draft policies), listening, facilitating reflection and discussion through the asking of clear and intentional questions, and receiving actionable feedback with opportunities to test ideas and practise implementation of new approaches.



<p>12. All schools with early career teachers undertaking statutory induction must adhere to the regulations and relevant statutory guidance.</p> <p>13. School staff with disabilities may require reasonable adjustments; working closely with these staff to understand barriers and identify effective strategies is essential.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensuring that appropriate training is provided to school leaders and the senior trust team to enable them to deliver this aspect of their role.</li></ul>
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## Seven – Organisational Management

Learn that...	Learn how to...
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Leaders have a duty of care to pupils and staff. Executive leaders have a responsibility to ensure all trust schools provide a safe environment in which children can learn and staff can work.</li> <li>2. Schools and colleges and their staff are an important part of the wider safeguarding system for children.</li> <li>3. Good financial, human and educational resource management, strategic planning, employee relations and risk management are the foundations of a good school trust. Trusts are public bodies and so have a duty to use all public money in the public interest.</li> <li>4. Different types of schools are funded through different mechanisms. Each mechanism has different financial regulations associated with it.</li> <li>5. Different types of employees have different terms and conditions.</li> <li>6. Executive leaders need to be able to lead, performance manage and develop and deploy the team of headteachers and senior leaders.</li> <li>7. To run a group of schools effectively, executive leaders must consider longer term strategic and financial planning, the use of cross-trust staff and a range of operational structures.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Create and oversee systems that ensure the protection and safety of pupils and colleagues across the trust and in all trust schools, including by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ensuring safeguarding is the first priority of every colleague.</li> <li>● Ensuring that the trust and its schools fulfils legal and statutory regulatory obligations related to safeguarding (including Keeping Children Safe in Education) and health and safety.</li> <li>● Ensuring that colleagues work with other agencies (e.g. children’s social care teams) to share information and support wider child protection work.</li> <li>● Overseeing and enabling clear, effective safeguarding and health and safety policies, processes and systems.</li> </ul> <p><b>Ensure that all trust schools have effective systems, processes and policies for managing admissions, exclusions and appeals, including by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ensuring school leaders and the senior trust team understand and comply with the relevant law and statutory guidance.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Confirming that all trust schools create, monitor and report on fair and inclusive policies, processes and systems.</li><li>● Ensuring school leaders and the senior trust team understand and carry out their responsibilities including complying with data, recording and reporting requirements.</li><li>● Supporting school leaders across the trust to implement best practice in planning, commissioning and monitoring alternative provision and ensuring appropriate alternative provision is available to trust schools.</li></ul> <p><b>Prioritise, allocate and manage resources (including financial, human and educational) appropriately, effectively and efficiently across the trust to ensure sustainability, including by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Understanding the financial mechanisms (and associated regulations) through which the trust is funded.</li><li>● Recognising that there is a strong connection between strategic decisions and the associated resource implications (e.g. using Integrated Curriculum and Financial Planning to ensure that the timetable delivers the trust's curriculum priorities within the available budget) and using this knowledge to inform decision making.</li><li>● Understanding how resource management can deliver economies of scale and improve efficiency and effectiveness across several organisations (e.g. in terms of finances, staffing, workload, educational provision and resources) and applying this to trust planning.</li></ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Taking deliberate decisions on the trust’s operating model based on the trust’s specific context (e.g. size, maturity, and geographical spread).</li><li>● Recommending a prudent budget to the trust board and overseeing and enabling clear, effective financial policies, processes and systems within the trust (e.g. procurement, audit, expenses).</li><li>● Ensuring that school leaders and the senior trust team make good use of financial benchmarking information to inform the trust and each school’s spending decisions.</li><li>● Understanding how to read accounts, statements and forecasts and using this to plan finances and appropriately monitor the budget.</li><li>● Considering a range of appropriate income generation activities to maximise funding streams.</li><li>● Overseeing a technology infrastructure that is good value for money, supports trust and school operations and teaching, and is safe and secure.</li><li>● Making sure there are policies, processes and systems in place to ensure that all premises are secure, well maintained and meet any statutory requirements.</li><li>● Drawing on the experience and expertise of colleagues with specialist knowledge in organisational management.</li><li>● Where appropriate, building the capacity and capability of colleagues with specialist knowledge, experience and expertise in organisational management to reflect the size and complexity of the trust.</li></ul>
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	<p><b>Recruit, develop, support and appropriately manage colleagues (including non-teaching colleagues) by creating and overseeing systems across the trust that:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Ensure recruitment and appointment processes are broad and inclusive, and based on open and fair criteria, to attract the best range of candidates for all roles.</li><li>● Maintain high expectations, enable regular and clear communication, consider staff motivations and workload, prioritise staff professional development and hold colleagues to account for their performance.</li><li>● Ensure appraisal processes are aligned to the core aim of improving teaching quality and pupil attainment.</li><li>● Ensure that all school leaders recognise that assessing teacher expertise through singular approaches (e.g. lesson observations) is limited and that they should use multiple methods of data collection to make inferences about teacher quality.</li><li>● Adhere to the law and statutory guidance related to employment (including management of misconduct, grievances, redundancy, flexible working, equality, and reasonable adjustments) and reflect policy and processes related to pay and conditions.</li><li>● Consider the expertise different colleagues have and deploy and delegate staff to maximise the use of that expertise.</li><li>● Consider a range of successful organisational and operational structures, their strengths and weaknesses,</li></ul>
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	<p>and how staff can be deployed centrally to work across the trust.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Facilitate the creation and regular review of succession plans in collaboration with those responsible for governance, particularly for critical roles across the trust.</li><li>● Ensure the trust has clear, effective HR policies, processes and systems within the trust (e.g. induction).</li></ul> <p><b>Oversee rigorous approaches to identifying, managing and mitigating risk, including by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Ensuring policies, processes and systems are in place to check that all colleagues act in accordance with the law and statutory guidance while empowering professionals to exercise their judgement where necessary.</li><li>● Ensuring policies, processes and systems are well designed (e.g. are clear and proportionate) and consistently implemented to avoid significant negative effects on professional culture and workload.</li><li>● Ensuring the approach to risk management involves regular, reported reviews and considers the likelihood and impact of any risk (including significant emergencies) alongside any mitigating actions and contingencies.</li><li>● Ensuring systems for feedback are in place that allow policies, processes and systems to be reviewed and improved.</li></ul>
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## Eight – Implementation

One of the characteristics of effective trusts, in addition to *what* they implement, is *how* they put those approaches into practice. This section sets out some important principles of implementation: the process of making, and acting on, effective evidence-informed decisions. The principles and activities can be applied to a range of different school improvement decisions - programmes or practices; trust-wide, whole school or targeted approaches; internally or externally generated ideas. The statements should be treated as guiding principles and activities, rather than as a rigid set of steps.

Whilst the principles of good implementation remain the same as leadership responsibilities increase, the emphasis changes, including: a wider scope of influence (e.g. from individual schools to a group of schools), greater complexity (e.g. managing multiple implementation efforts), and more strategic implementation roles (e.g. creating the overall climate).

Learn that...	Learn how to...
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Implementation is an ongoing process that must adapt to context over time, rather than a single event. It involves the application of specific implementation activities and principles over an extended period (e.g. implementation planning, ongoing monitoring).</li> <li>2. Successful implementation requires expert knowledge of the approach that is being implemented and the related area of practice (e.g. behaviour), which is shared amongst staff.</li> <li>3. Implementation should involve repurposing existing processes and resources (e.g. governance, data collection) rather than creating a separate set of procedures.</li> <li>4. Effective implementation begins by accurately diagnosing</li> </ol>	<p><b>Plan and execute implementation in stages by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ensuring that implementation is a structured process, where school leaders and senior trust staff actively plan, prepare, deliver and embed changes.</li> <li>● Prioritising appropriately by making a limited number of meaningful strategic changes and pursuing these diligently.</li> <li>● Reviewing and stopping ineffective practices before implementing new ones.</li> <li>● Recognising the complexity in managing parallel improvement projects within, and across, a group of schools (e.g. identifying competing and aligned priorities, deploying overall capacity and resources, managing</li> </ul>

the problem and making evidence-informed decisions on what to implement.

5. Thorough preparation is important: time and care spent planning, communicating and resourcing the desired changes provides the foundation for successful delivery. Teachers and leaders should keep checking how ready their colleagues are to make the planned changes.
6. Implementing an approach with fidelity (i.e. as intended) increases the chance of it impacting positively on school practice and pupil outcomes. Any approach should specify which features of the approach need to be adopted closely and where there is scope for adaptation.
7. A combination of integrated activities is likely to be needed to support implementation (e.g. training, monitoring, feedback) rather than any single activity. Follow-on support (e.g. through high-quality coaching) is key to embedding new skills and knowledge developed during initial training.
8. Delivery of a new approach is a learning process – expect challenges but aim for continuous improvement. Monitoring implementation is an essential tool in identifying, and acting on, problems and solutions.
9. The confidence to make good implementation decisions is derived, in part, from confidence in the data on which those decisions are based. Reliable monitoring and evaluation enable schools to make well-informed choices, and to see how their improvement efforts are impacting on teacher knowledge, classroom practices and pupil outcomes.

multiple work streams, considering interdependencies between projects).

**Make the right choices on what to implement by:**

- Identifying a specific area for improvement using a robust diagnostic process, focusing on the problem that needs solving, rather than starting with a solution.
- Providing credible interpretations of reliable data, which focus on pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- Examining current approaches, how they need to change and the support required to do so.
- Adopting new approaches based on evidence of what has (and has not) worked before, using both internal and external evidence (e.g. pupil outcome data and research-based guidance).
- Ensuring it is suitable for the trust context, the parameters within which the change will operate and where the trust is in its development trajectory (e.g. securing a school's financial sustainability would be an immediate priority).
- Assessing and adapting plans based on the degree to which colleagues are ready to implement the approach (e.g. current staff motivation, expertise, training and development).

**Prepare appropriately for the changes to come by:**

- Being explicit about what will be implemented, and the



<p>10. A school's capacity to implement an approach is rarely static (e.g. staff leave, contexts change). Sustained implementation requires leaders to keep supporting and rewarding the appropriate use of an approach and check it is still aligned with the overall strategy and context.</p> <p>11. Implementation benefits from dedicated but distributed school leadership. Senior leaders should provide a clear vision and direction for the changes to come. At the same time, implementation is a complex process that requires feedback from staff and shared leadership responsibilities.</p> <p>12. Implementation processes are influenced by, but also influence, school climate and culture. Implementation is easier when staff feel trusted to try new things and make mistakes, safe in the knowledge that they will be supported with resources, training, and encouragement to keep improving.</p>	<p>overall desired outcomes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Specifying the elements of the approach that appear critical to its success (i.e. the 'active ingredients') and communicating expectations around these with clarity.</li> <li>● Developing a clear, logical and well specified implementation plan, and using this plan to build collective understanding and ownership of the approach.</li> <li>● Using an integrated set of implementation activities that work at different levels in the trust (e.g. individual teachers, whole school changes, across a trust).</li> </ul> <p><b>Deliver changes by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Managing expectations and encouraging 'buy-in' until positive signs of changes emerge.</li> <li>● Monitoring implementation (including by clearly assigning and following up on the completion of critical tasks) and using this information to tailor and improve the approach over time (e.g. identifying a weak area of understanding and providing further training).</li> <li>● Reinforcing initial training with expert follow-on support within the trust.</li> <li>● Prioritising the 'active ingredients' of the approach until they are securely understood and implemented, and then, if needed, introducing adaptations.</li> </ul>
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	<p><b>Sustain changes by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Using reliable monitoring and evaluation to review how the implementation activities are meeting the intended objectives and continue to align with school improvement priorities.</li><li>● Continuing to model, acknowledge, support, recognise and reward good practice.</li><li>● Treating scale-up of an approach as a new implementation process (e.g. from one department to another, or from one school in a trust to another).</li></ul>
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## Nine – Working in Partnership

Learn that...	Learn how to...
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Good relationships and partnerships are a foundation of a good school.</li> <li>2. Building effective relationships with parents, carers and families can improve pupils' motivation, behaviour and academic success.</li> <li>3. There is an established link between the home learning environment at all ages and children's performance at school. However, evidence on effective strategies that schools can use to engage parents/carers in their children's education is mixed.</li> <li>4. If the aim is solely to improve academic outcomes, classroom interventions working directly with children currently have more evidence of effectiveness at improving educational outcomes than parenting interventions with the same aim.</li> <li>5. Working effectively with parents/carers can be challenging, and is likely to require sustained effort and support.</li> <li>6. Sharing effective practice between schools, and building capacity and effective mechanisms for doing so, is key to closing the attainment gap. To improve performance school leaders need to collaborate and work with colleagues and other relevant professionals within and</li> </ol>	<p><b>Ensure the trust and its schools work in partnership with parents and carers, including by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Enabling and supporting trust schools to use practical approaches to support parents and carers to help their children with learning at home.</li> <li>● Working with trust schools to encourage communication of a positive, two-way dialogue about learning, focussing on building parents/carers' efficacy and avoiding stigmatising, blaming, or discouraging parents/carers.</li> <li>● Supporting trust schools to plan carefully for group-based parenting initiatives (e.g. regular workshops) ensuring that the time and location is convenient, recruitment is face-to-face, relationships are built on trust and the environment is informal and welcoming.</li> <li>● Promoting the use of structured, evidence-based programmes across the trust to develop positive behaviour and consistency where needed; starting by assessing needs and asking parents and carers about what would help them.</li> <li>● Supporting trust schools to offer regular home visits for younger children with greater needs, as and when appropriate, to support parents and carers that struggle to attend meetings, and to build relationships.</li> </ul>

beyond the school, including relevant external agencies and bodies.

- Promoting effective handling of parental complaints across the trust by developing and implementing a trust wide fair and non-adversarial procedure that is easy to use and understand.

**Enable the trust and its schools to work in partnership with the community, schools and school trusts and other organisations, including professional associations, businesses and local authorities, including by:**

- Ensuring that the trust and its schools clarify, in writing where appropriate, the purpose of the partnership and the commitments and/or duties each partner has to it.
- Ensuring that key staff understand the full range of organisations around a trust and its schools, how they interact with the trust, its schools and each other, and any statutory relationships or duties that exist between organisations.
- Making sure that school leaders and the senior trust team establish clear, open communications between organisations with nominated 'relationship holders' and clear escalation points where appropriate.
- Contributing expertise to existing networks and partnerships (e.g. through becoming a National Leader of Education).
- Facilitating key trust staff to contribute their expertise to existing networks and partnerships (e.g. by joining local advisory bodies).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Acting as a credible public advocate when required through a carefully thought through approach to engagement with the media and use of other communication channels (e.g. social media, newsletters, websites), and ensuring that school leaders and senior trust staff are also able to perform this role where appropriate.</li></ul>
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## Ten – Governance and Accountability

Learn that...	Learn how to...
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. High quality effective and ethical governance is key to success in our school system.</li> <li>2. Different types of school structures have different governance and accountability arrangements. Each set of arrangements has different regulations and statutory duties and therefore different policies, processes and systems associated with it (including the governance handbook and the Academies Financial Handbook).</li> <li>3. Executive leaders are accountable for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.</li> <li>4. Executive leaders have a responsibility to ensure that staff know, understand and are held to account for their professional responsibilities.</li> <li>5. Executive leaders are responsible for ensuring that the trust and all of its schools operate effectively and efficiently within the required regulatory frameworks and meet all statutory duties.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Appropriately participate in governance, and fulfil obligations to give account, be challenged, and accept responsibility, including by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Understanding the governance arrangements of the trust, the respective roles (including the chair, the clerk and the accounting officer), the policies, processes and systems and the regulatory environment associated with it.</li> <li>● Applying a good understanding of the Governance handbook, Academies Financial Handbook, company law and charity law to the creation and continuous improvement of trust policies, processes and systems.</li> <li>● Ensuring the trust meets regularity, propriety and value for money requirements.</li> <li>● Ensuring that formal papers that are prepared and presented are clear, concise and accurate.</li> <li>● Establishing and sustaining professional working relationships with those in governance roles (including the chair, clerk and accounting officer).</li> <li>● Understanding the relevant accountability measures and report clearly on them, the implications for the trust and the appropriate actions the trust needs to take.</li> </ul>

	<p><b>Ensure the trust appropriately participates in and fulfils obligations to external organisations including the Department for Education, Ofsted, the Education and Skills Funding Agency, Local Authority and auditors, including by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Adhering to the Principles of Public Life at all times.</li><li>● Applying a good understanding of the law, statutory guidance and regulatory frameworks to decisions, processes and systems and ensuring all senior trust staff do the same.</li><li>● Ensuring reports that are submitted are timely and accurate, and trust schools participate in inspections or reviews as required.</li><li>● Building professional working relationships with those in external accountability organisations, and encouraging all senior trust staff to do the same.</li><li>● Ensuring that all relevant trust staff understand the roles and responsibilities involved in more complex partnerships involving pupils (e.g. health, education and children’s services organisations in an Education and Health Care Plan, and where pupils are in alternative provision).</li></ul>
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