

The Skylark Partnership Improvement Strategy - Delivery Plan

Our vision: to create a family of exceptional nurturing educational environments for children and young people with medical and emotional needs, where each is unique and distinctive, whilst sharing the same values and ethos, preparing them for their next stage in life.

'Together we can'

Our underlying principles

- Our students and their families at the heart of what we do: *personalised learning programmes with empower them to learn and achieve, to develop resilience and confidence, and to feel valued so that they can make progress*
- Our staff and partners share our passion for achieving positive outcomes for our students; *through providing innovative and holistic approaches to engagement and support in enabling them to realise their potential*
- Our partnership is focussed on growth: *we value and celebrate success, challenge where appropriate, and strive to be the best we can be*

We will not be able to deliver on any of our core principles unless we have the following characteristics which form the basis of our trust improvement plan:

- Inspirational leadership and management
- High quality teaching
- Safe and happy settings
- Supportive and nurturing staff
- Partnerships which benefit the pupil outcomes
- Opportunities to learn together

The Skylark Partnership (TSP) was created with the intent to improve outcomes for children and young people who are too unwell to access education in their normal settings and require additional support either in a hospital setting or other alternative provision. With the needs of our

pupils and their families at the centre of our planning, we can use our shared expertise in working with pupils with medical needs to share best practice and develop our teaching and support strategies further.

TSP believes that we can provide the leadership and direction for partner schools and academies within our localities through training and development in the best practice in support pupils with medical and mental health needs at school. We also plan to work collaboratively with other providers of hospital education across the country through our national networking activities, particularly in the area of research into best practice in this sector which is not well evidenced at the present time. This will support our ambition to provide the best educational support for pupils with medical and mental health needs who are admitted to our hospital settings or supported in the community.

TSP recognises that our improvement strategy will never be static, but will be constantly evolving to meet the needs of our pupils and their medical/mental health needs, alongside our relentless drive for higher standards. We recognise that particularly in our sector this will require creativity, innovation, transparency, flexibility, energy and the ability to be reflective, all within the ever decreasing funding available. TSP will be brave in seeking new opportunities and taking measured risks. We recognise we may not always get it right, but will seek to learn from all of our experiences, take into account the views of all of our stakeholders, particularly our pupils, and move on to create better solutions.

This improvement strategy sets out how TSP will work with all settings within the trust and the principles that underpin it. We recognise that we are at the start of the development of the trust, and methods for improvement that we use to develop and mature may change over time. Overarching all of this is our desire to achieve equality of opportunity for pupils with medical and mental health needs, and enable them to meet their potential, despite their health challenges. We want The Skylark Partnership to be ‘beyond outstanding’.

1. Inspirational leadership and management

What we will achieve	How we will do it	Why it is important
1.1 Develop a systematic approach to inspirational leadership at all levels and across all academies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systematic planning and ambitious target setting in improvement plans of all academies • Systematic evaluation of impact of actions towards targets leading to evidence based judgements on effectiveness 	Evidence based practice will allow us to make validated judgements regarding the quality of our provision, and evaluated the impact of our improvement strategy

<p>1.2 Share best practice across the leadership levels and create expertise that can be shared across the trust</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● hold regular leadership meetings for middle and senior leaders to share best practice and emergent thinking ● deploy leaders as peer support advisors across the trust ● bring in leaders from other outstanding hospital education providers to help develop our skills and knowledge. 	<p>Leaders will connect with a variety of other settings to challenge their thinking and to redefine their approaches. Having a reflective and open leadership approach will develop creative and innovative thinking and share learning, which should in turn lead to improvement in teaching and learning in all settings at each academy in the trust.</p>
<p>1.3 Develop competent and confident leaders who can provide inspirational leadership across the trust</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● aspirational leaders will complete appropriate leadership programmes ● senior leaders will complete appropriate leadership programmes ● all leaders will undertake teaching and learning activities on a regular basis 	<p>Middle and senior leaders will be well trained and accredited in the latest theory and practice of excellent leadership and are able to bring this knowledge, skill and expertise into the trust.</p>
<p>1.4 All staff to have a performance management target that reflects the trust improvement plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● develop a trust performance management framework that ensures all employed staff are set challenging targets for the realisation of the trust's improvement priorities 	<p>The improvement plan will be informed by accurate self evaluation on the effectiveness of teaching and learning across all of the settings, and will involve all stakeholders. By all staff having performance management targets linked to the delivery of this plan, it will ensure that our resources are focussed on improvement activities</p>
<p>1.5 Governors and trustees will increase their expertise in order to effectively hold all leaders to account</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● all governors and trustees undertake an annual training needs analysis and we will deploy learning and development activities to increase competence and effectiveness. We will utilise both internal and external resources ● we will work with external expert advice through Governospace to develop trustees governor skills and understanding of their role 	<p>Research indicates that having effective governance in place is an essential component of good and outstanding trusts. It means that heads of settings are routinely challenged to do more by trustees who know the settings within the trust and can use a variety of means to understand how the settings is enabling improved outcomes for the pupils and their families.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● we will develop a work programme for our governance which will connect into the trusts improvement plan, linking key senior leaders with identified trustees ● we will bring governors and trustees together to learn from each other, share best practice and ideas ● we will develop a corporate governance development plan for the trust board annually 	
<p>1.6 All academies have excellent financial controls and all spending decisions are scrutinised</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Chief Financial Officer, School Business Managers and Head Teachers will ensure that there is a clear and robust financial plan in place which accurately reflects the budget for the school year ● CFO ad SBMs will ensure that there is a detailed 3 year medium term financial strategy in place for each setting. ● Activities linked to the trust improvement plan are fully costed and included in the financial reporting 	<p>Financial viability and sustainability are the key underpinnings of any organisation. The trust and the settings within it cannot determine their resource allocation now and in the future unless they have a strong grip on the current and planned expenditure. Trust improvement activities to improve outcomes cannot be implemented successfully unless they are financially viable and achievable.</p>

<p>1.7 Policies and procedures meet statutory requirements but take account of local variance and evolve to reflect best practice and lessons learned</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The trust will have a robust library of policies and procedures which will be regularly reviewed. ● we will use near miss events, any complaints, staff surveys and pupil voice to support the review of our procedures and policies and to ensure that they are fit for purpose ● each setting will have local policies and procedures which reflect the needs of that setting ● staff and managers will have a good understanding of how to use policies and procedures to enable improvement 	<p>Staff, pupils and parents/carers must have trust in the actions of leaders of the trust and the settings within it, and faith in the systems and processes that govern the way that the trust runs. Without clearly articulated policies and procedures which are fit for purpose, there is an increased risk that openness and transparency will be reduced. Although conflict is a healthy part of any relationship, conflict that cannot be addressed openly and clearly will breed resentment and dissatisfaction - this would affect the ethos of the trust.</p>
<p>1.8 Self evaluation will be based in evidence and reflect the high ambition for our pupils</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We will draw on the leadership teams from across the settings to provide peer review and challenge for self evaluation and improvement plans. ● we will establish a network of external audit partners from good or outstanding medical needs settings to test our capacity for self assessment and to support us in planning for stretch improvement targets 	<p>Using peer review and external audit of our self evaluation and improvement plan will ensure that we are evidential in our assessment and ambitious in our improvement planning. This will increase the potential of lead improved outcomes for our learners.</p>

2. High quality teaching and learning

The core business of all of our settings is teaching and learning: this includes high quality professional development. All staff are involved in enabling learning and we help each other in a supportive manner to be the very best that we can be.

What we will achieve	How we will do it	Why it is important
2.1 We will know our schools well quantitatively and qualitatively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● TSP will adopt a culture of realistic, appropriate and challenging expectations using nationally agreed key performance indicators. We will benchmark against other similar settings nationally. ● We will recognise the individuality of each of our settings in decisions about indicators 	<p>TSP will need to monitor the 'performance' of all of our settings in key areas - however, these areas are not clearly defined in terms of data.</p> <p>We will work with colleagues to produce reports that enable LGB and trustees to understand our effectiveness and to be able to ask us challenging questions.</p>
2.2 All pupils will have a personalised holistic approach to learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All settings will have the same ethos, that the child sits at the centre of all we do. Settings will quickly identify barriers to learning both academic and medical/social, emotional and mental health, and will provide tailored personalised learning programmes to address these barriers. ● This will be done by timely interventions and Quality First Teaching. 	<p>Pupils progress should not be inhibited by barriers. These should be identified as quickly as possible before (or as soon as possible after) admission to one of our settings so that all time spent within TSP is utilised effectively to promote learning and support recovery and transition. Staff need to be confident and supported to change their approach when required, and leaders skilled enough to be able to use the available evidence to identify barriers.</p>
2.3 Staff will participate in enquiry based learning in order to ensure a best practice approach is used.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We will facilitate staff to learn with and from each other, utilising research, enquiries and our own professional practice. ● We will have due regard to the impact of our pupil's medical and mental health conditions and how that in turn will impact on their learning and progress. 	<p>Staff will be encouraged to view themselves as learners and understand the link between research enquiry, professional development and how this impacts on the effectiveness of our teaching programmes.</p> <p>Research enquiry will become a driver for our school improvement.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The outcomes of our learning will be used to support our improvement priorities across the settings. 	
2.4 All schools will be involved on shared peer review both internally and externally and quality assurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior leaders will be tasked to undertake a strategic review across the MAT in focussed areas which will be linked to common themes, each one linking to the individual settings improvement plan. We will use external quality assurance to challenge and support judgements and to evaluate the effectiveness of the self evaluation processes 	Senior leaders will develop a shared approach and a formal framework to scrutinise practice and progress across the settings. External reviews e.g by Challenge Partners, for each setting will quality assure any judgements made and triangulate evidence to ensure accuracy, reliability and validity.
2.5 We will deploy expertise strategically	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will use performance management systems and our robust methods of monitoring teaching and learning to identify staff strengths and expertise. We will broaden the leadership experiences of emerging leaders and excellent practice to share their expertise across the settings. 	By widening the range of leadership experiences for aspiring leaders, we will support succession planning, professional development and retention. This will allow us to address specific challenges quickly through shared practice and improved outcomes.
2.6 We will seek and utilise best practice within and outside the Partnership, learning from excellence, to secure ongoing improvement in teaching and learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will develop and offer personalised professional support to staff through discussion about their practice and from their own self reflection. This will be done through a system of supervision and collaborative coaching. 	Good coaching encourages staff to become more reflective, articulate, exploratory and understanding in relation to their work and its impact on their learning. If they are more aware of themselves, and their capabilities to support learning, they will be able to hone their skills of planning, monitoring and assessment. This will ensure that the quality of teaching keeps improving.

3. Safe and happy settings

Every professional working with children has the responsibility to safeguard them from harm. However, children with medical and mental health difficulties are some of the most vulnerable in our society and as such require additional vigilance and support. A child's safety should not come at the expense of their enjoyment of education, and we will place equal measure on the safety and happiness of our pupils.

What we will achieve	How we will do it	Why it is important
<p>3.1 Safeguarding practices will be exemplary and compliant with statutory requirements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All setting will have a lead DSL with at least two deputy DSLs, dependent on the nature and requirements of the setting. These staff will attend regular safeguarding training offered by their LSCB and will support other staff in accessing training. ● DSLs will be provided with the appropriate supervision. ● All our setting will undergo an external quality assurance process, in line with the section 11 requirements to improve practice and support with the development plan. ● Spot checks on the single central record will be undertaken termly 	<p>It is the legal duty of all schools to ensure that children are safe from harm. If children do not feel safe, they will not enjoy and achieve in their education.</p> <p>The Partnership also has a moral and ethical duty to each and every child who is supported by our settings, to ensure that they are kept safe from harm and abuse at all times.</p>

<p>3.2 The whole school will celebrate achievements and learn from mistakes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Settings will hold celebration events with parents and stakeholders. ● All achievements will be celebrated in an appropriate way e.g. writing a song in music, producing a poem etc. ● All setting will ensure that time is provided to recognise the importance of reflection 	<p>Celebrating learning provides an opportunity for settings and families to connect with each other and to their communities. It also underlines the importance of education as part of the recovery process during a period of illness. These celebrations will communicate the importance of personalised curriculum programmes and showcase the achievements of our pupils and staff. Allowing time for reflection in our work enables us to learn, to question and so to improve.</p>
<p>3.3 Staff will be provided with regular updated training</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We will have a rolling programme of training for staff through a variety of different sources, and in line with the responsibilities and requirements of their roles. ● The programme will be regularly evaluated and reviewed to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and is in line with statutory requirements. ● Staff to have access to supervision 	<p>If staff are to keep our pupils safe, they must be well trained and confident in safeguarding, and know that they have the support from their DSLs. Evaluation of the training will involve all stakeholders, including staff themselves.</p>
<p>3.4 Positive behaviour for learning is supported</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We will promote a positive and nurturing approach to understanding different behaviours, its function and the possible causal factors. ● We will share best practice across the Partnership and develop staff areas of expertise in the different medical/mental health conditions and how they impact on behaviour for learning. 	<p>Behaviours which challenge within our settings, and may escalate present significant risks not only to the child and their life chances, but also to the other vulnerable children and young people that maybe accessing education. It is important that we can see beyond the behaviours, understand what the behaviour is trying to communicate and then provide appropriate, child centred holistic support to</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will use agreed recording systems so that we can analyse data effectively and measure the impact of interventions, approaches and plans about the outcomes for our pupils. 	enable individuals to succeed and access learning.
3.5 Pupils are encouraged to attend as many sessions as their health will allow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Partnership will develop an agreed Attendance Policy, which includes a framework for supporting pupils who are persistently absent. • We will ensure that staff understand their role in supporting and promoting attendance at teaching sessions, including setting a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality. 	<p>Providing an education of the highest quality for all of our pupils and recognises that this can be better supported by promoting attendance at teaching sessions.</p> <p>Through regular attendance, pupils will be able to take full advantage of the social and educational opportunities available to them through our settings, and in addition to that offered by their home schools. We recognise that good progress and attainment depends on good attendance.</p>
3.6 Staff will be kept safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will ensure that staff are aware of pupil's past history and any risks • We will ensure that the lone working policy is robust and adhered to at all times • We will have systems in place for all staff to access supervision • we will have appropriate risk assessments in place 	Our staff are our most important asset so it is important that they feel valued and that we have mechanisms in place to keep them 'safe'.

4. Supportive and nurturing staff

Children and young people with medical and mental health difficulties need additional support and nurturing to enable them to engage successfully with their education programmes during their illness. Staff need to have the appropriate skills and knowledge to provide a personalised and innovative approach to produce appropriate learning programmes to encourage and support our pupils with their learning.

What we will achieve	How we will do it	Why it is important
4.1 Appropriately trained staff with relevant knowledge and skills to be able to provide outstanding learning programmes for pupils with medical needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will have a full induction programme for new staff which will include training for key skills required for their post e.g. protective behaviours. This will include training on how to keep themselves safe and well. 	Only by having appropriately trained and skilled staff will be able to ensure that our pupils are accessing outstanding learning programmes that are matched to their particular medical/mental health challenge and will enable them to continue with their learning.
4.2 Opportunities for staff to 'grow' and develop new skills and knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will provide ongoing opportunities for staff to develop their skills and knowledge, and make this a requirement of the performance management process Staff who wish to progress into leadership positions will be given opportunities to develop those strategic skills e.g. through external courses run by the National College. 	Staff will identify their areas for development through an accurate and honest self assessment of their skills. Through the PM process, staff will be encouraged to be reflective practitioners and to think creatively about how they can develop their knowledge and skills further e.g. through visit, engagement with external providers. National College accredited courses will be offered where appropriate
4.3 Supervision systems that support staff to be the best they can be	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All staff will be required to participate in the supervision process to support their health and wellbeing. 	Effectiveness of supervision evaluation will be externally reviewed Staff who undertake supervision will be appropriately trained Expertise will be sought from external stakeholders e.g. EPs, CAMHs where necessary.

4.4 Values based settings which respect and value all individuals involved in the Partnership's communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All settings will be required to seek the Values Based Education accreditation 	This is a quality mark for the way in which we will conduct ourselves and supports the ethos and vision of the Partnerships
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5. Partnership which benefit pupil outcomes

Our pupils are usually dual registered with their home schools, and they will also be receiving care from a medical professional. Therefore our partnership working with these key stakeholders is crucial to successful outcomes for these pupils. We recognise that our pupils also have a life outside of our settings, and that they need to take their learning beyond our settings and continue it elsewhere. It is essential that we support our pupils to become the best adults they can be in the future, being responsible and independent citizens through effective partnership working.

What we will achieve	How we will do it	Why it is important
5.1 All stakeholders (including pupils and parents and carer) have a strong voice in influencing the work of the schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will actively seek the views of parents and other stakeholders about the work of our settings and the Partnership. We will use a range of tools to access these including face to face, questionnaires, online surveys etc. We will ensure that these views are collated, analysed, reported upon and acted upon. This will then inform our team improvement planning. 	Parents are by far the most important influences in a child's life. Their support can play a key role at all stages of education, including when their child is unwell, and they can make a significant contribution to improving engagement, and attendance so accelerating progress. Positive involvement of stakeholders, including home schools and medical professionals means that our pupils can have access to the resources that they need to support them appropriately with their education during a period of illness.
5.2 To improve opportunities for learning about life skills, enterprise and employability in order to better prepare pupils for post 16 transitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will ensure that our settings have strong representation at networks and forums relating to enterprise and employability. 	We want all of our pupils to develop as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors, who are supported to recognise

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will raise awareness of our settings with local business and employers. • We will invest resources in partnerships with post 16-18 providers locally to our settings 	<p>their aspirations and potential once they leave education.</p> <p>Working with our post 16-18 providers is crucial so that they understand the unique needs of our learners and how they can support them effectively to be successful in the phase of their education.</p>
5.3 Develop 'pupil voice' and influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will give our pupil's voice a high profile and facilitate its influence on the improvement work we undertake across our settings and the Partnership. 	<p>Pupils and adults working together as partners to ensure that the setting provides the best possible learning environment for all is important.</p> <p>We want all of our pupils to have a strong and influential voice and have the confidence and ability to make good choices and decisions. We want them to know that their voice matters, and that they can affect positive change for others.</p>
5.4 Develop partnerships within our local communities and wider area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each setting within the Partnership will ensure that there are opportunities for pupils to undertake part of their learning away from their 'classroom'. • We will facilitate methods by which our pupils can participate in local, regional and national events. 	<p>We want all of our pupils to feel valued, visible and fully included in the Partnership and their own communities. We want them to be active and responsible citizens.</p>
5.5 We will learn from best practice, research and enquiry from other settings, schools and education systems in the UK and other countries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will base our decision making regarding pedagogy and appropriate curriculums in research, innovation and enquiry • We will undertake our own research to evaluate the effectiveness of our practices and will share these with other similar settings. 	<p>We want our settings to be flexible, dynamic and responsive to the needs, interests, abilities of our pupils. We want to contribute to the preparation of our pupils for life. Only by learning from each other and working collaboratively, will we ensure that the are providing the best possible learning programmes for our pupils.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will use 'Challenge Partners' to support our quality assurance and to challenge and support us in our development. 	
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6. Opportunities to learn together

What we will achieve	How we will do it	Why it is important
6.1 We will make best use of expertise across the partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will use staff skills from across the Partnership to provide training and support for staff We will undertake an audit of staff skills so we are aware of our resources We will encourage staff to be self reflective so that they can develop their expertise We will use peer to peer learning, coaching and mentoring 	<p>This will ensure consistency of approach and equality in terms of teaching and learning across the settings.</p> <p>This will build an ethos of collaborative learning</p>
6.2 We will address shared CPD priorities as a whole partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All settings will undertake their own self evaluation The Partnership will also conduct a self evaluation Common areas/themes will be shared and CPD identified and sourced as indicated. 	<p>Opportunities to learn together create positive staff relationships and will engender a sense of shared purpose and vision.</p>

