



Priorities for the QEGSMAT Strategic Action Plan

May 2016

The QEGSMAT is standards driven; it aims to provide world-class education and care that allows every young person to reach their potential; it recognises the importance of teaching and learning. It operates a robust school improvement system, with the ultimate aim of doing something exceptional for young people in our area. All young people will be safe and all will be supported, whatever their needs.

Vision of the QEGSMAT is based on Question; Explore; Give; Succeed.

The QEGSMAT aims for all academies to be outstanding. This means outstanding outcomes for all young people; innovative, enthusiastic, well-trained staff that provide high-quality teaching, learning and assessment experiences every day, and pupils/students that leave education well-prepared for the next step of their lives.

The QEGSMAT aims to contribute positively to the self-improving school-led system in education across this locality. We are committed to adding real value to the community, helping it become even more effective in order to achieve the very best for all young people. We believe in true collaboration; working in partnership, investing in people and building capacity for long term, sustainable success.

Our academies/schools will need to respond to the challenge of creating this landscape.

'Articulating and making our vision real'

Our strategic action plan is ambitious and exciting; it reflects our locality and the needs of our young people. The country's education system is in a state of fundamental change as we move to a self-improving system that reduces central government control in favour of a school-led system. This provides a great opportunity for all of our academies/schools to take the lead and create a system that our young people deserve.

Bold and dynamic leadership, at all levels, is fundamental to help transform our local education system. We need to develop and own this new system together and take risks to ensure all our learners, regardless of their starting point or background, have their needs met and thrive in the communities that we create. As a high performing and ambitious MAT, we need to take the lead and create an even higher performing group of academies/schools.

Our challenge is to continue our journey in improving systems so that all the academies within the QEGSMAT are 'outstanding', not only in terms of their Ofsted judgement, but also in the eyes of our learners, staff, and local and wider community.

Anne Martin NLE
Executive Headteacher/CEO



Priorities for the QEGSMAT Strategic Action Plan : SUMMARY

For the next four years, the QEGSMAT will focus on a range of priorities; centrally, there will be 3 main areas of focus:



1

THE CENTRAL TEAM

The role of the 'Central Team' is to be clearly defined; this includes back office functions, as well as delivery support (curriculum, teaching & learning, CPD), and capacity for intervention and/or growth. The team at the centre may also use the existing expertise in individual academies in the QEGSMAT to develop optimum school to school support. The QEGSMAT to have a clear funding strategy, and to identify demand and develop the Central Team accordingly.

2

STRATEGY FOR GROWTH

The QEGSMAT to have a defined strategy for growth, understanding the need to build capacity in advance of new academies joining, and preparing for the challenges of different types of academies joining the MAT (start-up, sponsored, converters in both phases). The QEGSMAT to have a clear understanding of the impact that different types of academy joining will have on its overall leadership and governance. The QEGSMAT to have a plan for optimum geographical coverage and to be prepared to say "no" where relevant.

3

COMMUNICATIONS

The QEGSMAT to be fully cognisant of the importance of communicating its core vision, using all forms of media, and to develop a strong brand which is used consistently. The QEGSMAT to develop both proactive and reactive systems for marketing, PR, and media handling, and to be able to influence key stakeholders.

For the next four years, we will concentrate, as a group of academies/schools, on 6 key areas:

1

VISION & VALUES

The QEGSMAT to have a clear and compelling vision for the future. All stakeholders to be clear about, and be able to articulate, the moral purpose of the QEGSMAT, its mission and its values. All stakeholders to share an understanding of what it means to be part of the QEGSMAT, including those elements that are non-negotiable.

2

ACHIEVEMENT

Achievement in the QEGSMAT schools/academies will build on the previous personal best, with year on year improved progress and outcomes for pupils/students of all abilities.

3

QUALITY ASSURANCE & DATA

The QEGSMAT to have available a wide range of both qualitative and quantitative data to develop clear methods of assessment, both of individual academies and of the QEGSMAT as a whole. The QEGSMAT to have robust peer review systems, ensuring that risks are effectively and swiftly managed, and intervening where performance levels drop below expected standards. The QEGSMAT schools/academies will build on the previous personal best, with year on year improved progress and outcomes for pupils/students of all abilities.

4

FINANCIAL STRATEGY & CONTROL

The QEGSMAT to have transparent and clear systems for ensuring financial probity, having access to accurate and timely management information to ensure effective budgeting. The QEGSMAT to make efficient use of economies of scale, achieving best value for top-sliced funds, and to pursue alternative revenue streams to benefit the QEGSMAT as a whole (eg: providing services beyond the QEGSMAT itself). A sustainable educational & business plan will be in place that supports the academies/schools to meet their core objective of delivering outstanding education for every child.

5

GOVERNANCE

The QEGSMAT to have a scheme of delegation which clearly defines responsibilities of the various levels of governance (Members, Trustees, Local Governing Body). All members of governance at all levels to be clear about their responsibilities, and to have access to relevant training and information to support their defined roles. Leadership and governance across the Trust will be outstanding and succession planning effective in securing leaders of a high calibre across QEGSMAT.

6

WORKFORCE STRATEGY

Recruitment, training and development of the workforce of leaders, support staff and administrators will result in an outstanding provision to all of our pupils/students. The QEGSMAT to have in place a workforce strategy that seeks to recruit, retain & develop all staff at all levels, promoting from within wherever possible and being able to deploy staff to where they are most needed. The QEGSMAT to provide high-quality, appropriately accredited training and development opportunities, and career support. Key roles throughout the QEGSMAT to have succession plans in place.

For the next four years, the QEGSMAT will focus on a range of priorities; centrally, there will be 3 main areas of focus:

1

THE CENTRAL TEAM - The role of the 'Central Team' is to be clearly defined; this includes back office functions, as well as delivery support (curriculum, teaching & learning, CPD), and capacity for intervention and/or growth. The team at the centre may also use the existing expertise in individual academies in the QEGSMAT to develop optimum school to school support. The QEGSMAT to have a clear funding strategy, and to identify demand and develop the Central Team accordingly.

The QEGSMAT will:

- Develop the key functions that will be provided centrally, including business, finance, and school improvement – ensuring they link with the QEGSMAT Action Plan;
- Plan and budget for services/functions that will be bought in from external sources;
- Develop capacity to deliver business and operational support;
- Develop and implement clear schemes of accountability;
- Audit, evaluate and develop a shared data management system to ensure data from each academy are collected in a consistent format;
- Monitor and review the 'membership fee' (or top slice), ensuring it is fit for purpose for each academy.

2

STRATEGY FOR GROWTH - The QEGSMAT to have a defined strategy for growth, understanding the need to build capacity in advance of new academies joining, and preparing for the challenges of different types of academies joining the MAT (start-up, sponsored, converters in both phases). The QEGSMAT to have a clear understanding of the impact that different types of academy joining will have on its overall leadership and governance. The QEGSMAT to have a plan for optimum geographical coverage and to be prepared to say "no" where relevant.

The QEGSMAT will:

- Develop a strategy for growth: rate of growth, optimum number of academies at each stage, and the balance of primary/secondary and sponsored/converter/start-up academies;
- Review governance, leadership and business structure of the QEGSMAT when appropriate (eg: as the MAT grows to 5+ academies, and again at 12+), adding capacity where required.

3

COMMUNICATIONS - The QEGSMAT to be fully cognisant of the importance of communicating its core vision, using all forms of media, and to develop a strong brand which is used consistently. The QEGSMAT to develop both proactive and reactive systems for marketing, PR, and media handling, and to be able to influence key stakeholders.

The QEGSMAT will:

- Develop a clear PR strategy that encompasses national, regional and local media – influencing key stakeholders where appropriate;
- Develop a media crisis strategy and ensure all key staff are aware of protocols in the event of press enquiries;
- Identify and then develop a range of marketing platforms to be used;
- Develop consistent procedures for gathering feedback, both internally and externally;
- Ensure all internal communications are fit for purpose and that key messages are shared.

For the next four years, we will concentrate, as a group of academies/schools, on 6 key areas. Each of these priority areas sets out what QEGSMAT will do to achieve these priorities and the reciprocal contribution from each academy, each of whom play an important role.

1 VISION AND VALUES (the non-negotiables):
The QEGSMAT to have a clear and compelling vision for the future. All stakeholders to be clear about, and be able to articulate, the moral purpose of the QEGSMAT, its mission and its values. All stakeholders to share an understanding of what it means to be part of the QEGSMAT, including those elements that are non-negotiable.

The QEGSMAT will:

- Ensure the core set of values is understood and upheld across the Trust;
- Develop the non-negotiables and ensure these are explicit across the Trust (ie: all academies are expected to follow) and that they have a direct impact on pupil/student outcomes, including curriculum planning, pedagogical and assessment practice;
- Ensure no academy becomes an outlier to the overall vision;
- Identify what success will look like for the Trust in one, three and five years' time.

The contribution of each academy/school to the delivery of this priority will be:

- To demonstrate 'Question; Explore; Give; Succeed' and uphold the Trust's core set of values;
- To implement, monitor and embed the shared non-negotiables and be able to articulate the impact on pupil/student outcomes;
- To identify what success will look like for the academy/school in one, three and five years' time – on their academy/school improvement plan.

2 ACHIEVEMENT in the QEGSMAT schools/academies will build on the previous personal best, with year on year improved progress and outcomes for pupils/students of all abilities.

The QEGSMAT will:

- Monitor and evaluate the quality of delivery and outcomes for pupils/students in all our academies/schools to ensure all our pupils/students attend good and outstanding academies/schools and, where there is a decline, that intervention happens immediately;
- Engage additional external scrutiny in order to

- provide the MAT board, the executive team, the LGB and the Heads with a reliable 'second opinion' on the performance of the academies/schools;
- Ensure any newly-established academy has the appropriate support to deliver a secure sustained high performance, whilst building on the successes of all current academies/schools (with an acknowledgement of travelling distance between all academies/schools);
- Create an educational improvement team that provides the necessary support for our academies/schools to deliver targeted intervention/challenge and become the vehicle for sharing strategies and best practice;
- Continue to identify and share the practice that has led to improved outcomes in one academy with the leadership teams in other QEGSMAT academies/schools, so that more pupils/students can benefit from this practice;
- Identify, through action research, strategies that academies/schools within the MAT (as well as those internationally and nationally) are implementing, that enable any pupil/student who is at risk of underachieving, be it due to attendance or lack of progress;
- Continue to design a curriculum that ensures all pupils/students, especially the most able, have opportunities to develop their thinking skills by being able to apply their prior learning to ensure greater depth of knowledge.

The contribution of each academy/school to the delivery of this priority will be:

- To improve or maintain consistency in standards that result in being judged to be 'good' or 'outstanding';
- To ensure all teaching is consistently good or better in all lessons and intervene where necessary;
- To continue to exceed the national floor targets each year in the key indicators by the Department for Education (DFE);
- To ensure that we continue to narrow the gap between the vulnerable and other pupils/students;

- To make sure that attendance continues to rise, for all groups of learners and staff;
- To engage with the QEGSMAT improvement team to identify areas for support for all staff;
- To identify staff with the potential to become SLEs (Specialist Leaders in Education), LLEs (Local Leaders), NLEs (National Leaders) and Lead Practitioners and to identify those able to make a wider contribution beyond that of their own academy/school, in order that performance increases every year in each academy/school.

3 QUALITY ASSURANCE AND DATA: The QEGSMAT to have available a wide range of both qualitative and quantitative data to develop clear methods of assessment, both of individual academies and of the QEGSMAT as a whole. The QEGSMAT to have robust peer review systems, ensuring that risks are effectively and swiftly managed, and intervening where performance levels drop below expected standards. The QEGSMAT schools/academies will build on the previous personal best, with year on year improved progress and outcomes for pupils/students of all abilities.

The QEGSMAT will:

- Develop and implement a comprehensive data dashboard, progress tracking and target setting processes;
- Ensure all middle and senior leaders are trained in current Quality Assurance processes and Ofsted requirements;
- Regularly review risk registers at both academy and MAT level, ensuring actionable contingency/countermeasure plans are drawn up, where needed;
- Review performance and identify areas of intervention at fortnightly Executive meetings with all HTs;
- Develop peer reviews across the Trust;
- Develop and communicate a clear accountability framework – including what happens when an academy/member of staff under-performs;
- Ensure all academy improvement plans feed into the QEGSMAT action plan;
- Create opportunities for pupils/students from different academies/schools to learn together to reinforce cross-trust peer learning;
- Celebrate the success of young people from all

- academies/schools, in all phases, so that more staff, pupils/students and parents witness more pupil/student achievement;
- Create a space where parents and families can access advice, guidance and training relating to the education of pupils/students in our schools/academies;
- Continue to develop a creative and dynamic curriculum that inspires our pupils/students to have a love for learning and make accelerated progress as a result.

The contribution of each academy/school to the delivery of this priority will be:

- To identify pupils/students who have made outstanding progress, made an outstanding contribution to their academy/school, and overcome significant obstacles to academic and personal success, in order that their achievement can be shared across the QEGSMAT;
- To support the implementation of a broad, balanced and creative curriculum;
- To publicise and support cross-trust pupil/student learning opportunities;
- To identify and apply all children with the skills and expertise needed for all to prepare themselves well for the next stage of their educational journey;
- To support excellence in pupils'/students' attitudes and ensure all understand the importance of behaviour in a range of social situations.

4 FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND CONTROL: The QEGSMAT to have transparent and clear systems for ensuring financial probity, having access to accurate and timely management information to ensure effective budgeting. The QEGSMAT to make efficient use of economies of scale, achieving best value for top-sliced funds, and to pursue alternative revenue streams to benefit the QEGSMAT as a whole (eg: providing services beyond the QEGSMAT itself). A sustainable educational and business plan will be in place that supports the academies/schools to meet their core objective of delivering outstanding education for every child

The QEGSMAT will:

- Continue to benchmark current financial performance;

- Present a balanced budget for approval;
- Identify, assess and report against the risks from the MAT operations;
- Ensure the Board are clear about, and aligned to, the guidelines set out in the academies financial handbook and that all parties have signed the register of business interests (including measures in place to manage conflicts, eg: related party transactions);
- Develop, implement, then review a set of financial policies, including clear schemes of delegation;
- Develop a strategy for creating savings and generating income for one, three and five years;
- Plan, with each academy, for curriculum changes, staffing, buildings and student numbers;
- Maintain and update the QEGSMAT risk assessment, so that potential risks to the successful delivery of this strategic plan that might have implications for our academies/schools are mitigated;
- Ensure that the QEGSMAT is compliant with the financial rules and regulations of the Charities Commission and Education Funding Agency (EFA);
- Deliver financial advice and guidance to each academy/school that is accurate and relevant;
- Support the organisations to maximise pupil/student recruitment to each academy/school;
- Support the academies/schools to appoint the right staff of the right quality to deliver outstanding education;
- Ensure that the academy based finance and HR processes are compliant with the QEGSMAT policies and procedures, so that organisations manage their budgets successfully, ensuring key improvement priorities are delivered;
- Continually review the QEGSMAT structure to ensure it has the correct expertise and adequate skill set to support the QEGSMAT to deliver its priorities;
- Support and develop skills and knowledge of the Central Team, so that they can contribute to the sustainability of the QEGSMAT and its future;
- Monitor QEGSMAT protocol for expansion annually, to ensure that the criteria for the admission (due diligence) of new academies/schools are fit for purpose and that expansion does not limit the capacity of the trust to deliver its charitable objectives of improving education for our current pupils/students;
- Ensure it starts to develop a team that will look at

the estates and that will provide expert advice for the QEGSMAT Board, Executive Team and LGBs on the state and condition of its buildings, leading to a clear maintenance plan for 2016-2020;

- Take advantage of any opportunities that exist to bid for additional grants to support the achievement and success of its pupils/students, or the development of our capital stock and buildings;
- Continue to develop the commercial arm of its National Support School, in order to generate additional income to support pupil/student learning and achievement;
- Maintain a strong local and national media presence, to ensure the QEGSMAT's successes are shared as widely as possible.

The contribution of each academy/school to the delivery of this priority will be:

- To update and review their own risks, addressing key points from the school/academy register that are likely to impact on the QEGSMAT register;
- To develop a close working relationship with the evolving QEGSMAT operations team, through informed and frequent communication, that enables both the QEGSMAT team and the academy/school-based team to carry out their responsibilities;
- To do everything possible to ensure each academy/school is oversubscribed in September 2017.

5 GOVERNANCE: The QEGSMAT to have a scheme of delegation which clearly defines responsibilities of the various levels of governance (Members, Trustees, Local Governing Body). All members of governances at all levels to be clear about their responsibilities, and to have access to relevant training and information to support their defined roles. Leadership and governance across the Trust will be outstanding and succession planning effective in securing leaders of a high calibre across QEGSMAT.

The QEGSMAT will:

- Ensure the Board of Trustees agrees a strategy for both itself and the LGBs, with priorities for achieving the vision with key performance indicators and timeframes for review;
- Ensure there is a clear system for communicating

- MAT priorities from Trustees to the LGB;
- Develop a strategy for reporting the work of the QEGSMAT and individual academies/schools to parents, local communities and the wider influencers;
- Build capacity across the MAT to accelerate and sustain school improvement, through the creation of an executive leadership team who will support and challenge our academies/schools to deliver improvement;
- Prioritise with senior leaders the annual focus for leadership development across the trust that meets the needs of each academy/school;
- Deliver future leaders for our academies/schools at every level across the QEGSMAT through high-quality professional development opportunities;
- Identify, train and support a cohort of leaders who can lead across sixth form, secondary, high, primary, middle and first academies/schools, in order to add more capacity to leadership and transition;
- Work with the Executive Headteacher/CEO, Director of Finance & Operations (DFO), and Leadership teams to ensure that the QEGSMAT Improvement Team responds to the needs of the academies/schools, to support the delivery of their professional development and school improvement priorities;
- Facilitate secondments and exchanges that share skills, fill vacancies, or develop capabilities that add value to the learning of the pupils/students in another academy/school within the QEGSMAT;
- Review, revise and update the model of governance across the QEGSMAT, to ensure that the structure is fit for purpose and capable of meeting the priorities, is consistently compliant, and capable of holding the Executive Team and Heads to account;
- To support the Board of Directors and LGBs to have full and appropriate membership and fulfil their role successfully.

The contribution of each academy/school to the delivery of this priority will be:

- To be clear and strategic with the Executive leadership team, in order to identify priorities for school improvement;
- To identify staff in the academy/school who are ready for further leadership development and to support their engagement in leadership training;

- To run in-house leadership development programmes that support succession planning in the academy/school and open up increased training opportunities for staff in other QEGSMAT academies/schools;
- To contribute to the delivery of the QEGSMAT Leadership and CPD programmes;
- To host and take advantage of the secondments and exchanges to other academies/schools and to host similar visits;
- To work with the LGB to deepen their understanding and awareness of the improvements required in the academy/school;
- To ensure that members of the LGB access training to increase their capacity to hold the academy/school to account;
- To attend board meetings and deliver feedback on the academy's/school's progress to the highest possible standard.

6 WORKFORCE SUPPLY AND DEVELOPMENT: Recruitment, training and development of the workforce of leaders, support staff and administrators will result of an outstanding provision to all of our pupils/students. The QEGSMAT to have in place a workforce strategy that seeks to recruit, retain and develop all staff at all levels, seeking to promote from within wherever possible and being able to deploy staff to where they are most needed. The QEGSMAT to provide high-quality, appropriately accredited training and development opportunities, and career support. Key roles throughout the QEGSMAT to have succession plans in place..

The QEGSMAT will:

- Develop a common talent management framework that provides clear career pathways, from teachers/staff trainees through to executive leaders;
- Develop effective systems to support and attract new staff, so that there is quality and consistency across the QEGSMAT and will conduct exit interviews for those who choose to leave;
- Consider a mobility clause to staff contracts (are academies/schools able to access the support they need to improve through secondments and StSS?);
- Ensure systems are in place across the QEGSMAT for the best practitioners to coach & lead others;

- Train, support and empower all middle leaders to monitor performance of classroom practice;
- Monitor and support the quality of teaching across the academies/schools to provide lessons for pupils/students that are consistently good or outstanding;
- Build capacity to accelerate and sustain the quality of teaching across the trust; identify staff with the potential to become SLEs (Specialist Leaders in Education), LLEs (Local Leaders), NLEs (National Leaders) and Lead Practitioners and to identify those able to make a wider contribution beyond that of their own academy/school, in order that performance increases every year in each academy/school;
- Optimise the use of the School Direct Programme and Assessment Only route for ITT;
- Ensure outstanding teachers are trained to coach and support others to become consistently good;
- Support the academies/schools to implement the Rivers performance management policy across the trust, so that all staff are treated equally and have access to clear and well-defined career pathways, with appropriate rewards for sustained and significant performance;
- Work with the Executive Principal/CEO and DFO to ensure the education improvement team responds to the needs of the academies/schools within the Trust to support the delivery of their professional development and school improvement priorities;
- Recruit, train, and deploy School Direct trainees to ensure that a pool of good and outstanding teachers is available for the QEGSMAT to employ each year;
- Create and deliver high-quality professional development for staff across the MAT to access together, so that it builds on, and complements, the training in-house;
- Deliver QEGSMAT conferences throughout the year, as well as network meetings each term, so that staff recognise them as high-quality sessions that promote 'true collaboration for outstanding achievement'.

The contribution of each academy/school to the delivery of this priority will be:

- To embed the MAT appraisal policy into each academy/school, so that it is understood by all staff and becomes an integral component in the improvement of the academy/school and the wider QEGSMAT;
- To recruit and retain high quality staff to work in each academy/school;
- To train and develop a high quality workforce through a range of learning opportunities;
- To support and challenge teachers, so that they consistently deliver lessons that are good and outstanding;
- To contribute to, and receive, support from the QEGSMAT School Improvement Team;
- To share with other academies/schools the professional development programme being delivered, in order to impact positively on standards in the wider community;
- To contribute to the design and delivery of QEGSMAT conferences and network meetings;
- To interview and host teaching placements for ITT cohorts, so they experience a wide range of academy/school contexts and practices;
- To increase participation rates of school staff on CPD programmes;
- To host and take advantage of the secondments and exchanges to other academies/schools and to host similar visits, allowing for further staff development.

