



## **Memorandum of Understanding**

The Exceed SCITT and Teaching Schools' school improvement strategy, set out in this document, has been developed in response to an ever-changing landscape of school improvement. It also helps clarify Exceed SCITT and Teaching Schools and its formal partners' role, remit and commitment in the school-led system through the partnership to ensure the Alliance has effective practice for the benefit of all.

### **Introduction: School Improvement Strategy**

Partnerships of schools providing school centred initial teacher training (SCITT) and peer support through a Teaching School Alliance, such as Exceed SCITT and Teaching Schools, play a central role in the government's strategy for school improvement. They empower school and multi-academy trust (MAT) leaders and practitioners (teachers and support staff) to lead and be accountable for their own organisation's improvement, as well as providing peer support to others. Teaching Schools, as 'Outstanding' schools (and more recently 'Good' schools in 'cold spot' areas of school-led activity) designated by government, broker the support needs identified by the partnership's headteachers and CEOs from other schools and providers. The SCITT provides the next generation of teachers and early career development for the partnership of MATs and schools it supports. Teaching Schools also provide professional learning for experienced teachers; leadership development; and designate, support and deploy system leaders (such as Local Leaders of Education (LLE) and Specialist Leaders of Education (SLE)) through rigorous and robust school-to-school support arrangements for the partnership.

Exceed SCITT and Teaching Schools are part of Exceed Academies Trust with Copthorne and Horton Grange primary schools both designated as Teaching Schools and National Support Schools. The CEO is the Accounting Officer of the SCITT and Teaching Schools and the MAT's Trustees are responsible for them. However, unlike some other MATs, Exceed is outward facing and welcomes other partner schools and MATs to join the partnership. The schools and MATs that entered into formal partnership with Exceed SCITT and Teaching Schools constitute the Teaching Schools Alliance (TSA). The functions of Exceed SCITT and Teaching Schools have been developed for the benefit of the Alliance and at the request of partnership Headteachers and CEOs. The SCITT and Teaching Schools sit within a MAT, a key feature of a sustainable school improvement model developed by government. Exceed Academies Trust is managing the risk and development of the provision in consultation with partners. Consultation includes a Teaching Schools Strategic Board, SCITT Board and meetings with Headteachers and CEOs.

Exceed SCITT and Teaching Schools are not the sole provider of the school improvement functions within Bradford or the region and their operation is not confined by political boundaries. Exceed SCITT and Teaching Schools work positively with other providers through the Teaching Schools Council, NCTL and the Bradford Teaching Schools' Forum. The MAT and Lead Schools of Exceed SCITT and Teaching Schools are based in Bradford, but its partnership extends beyond the district. Exceed SCITT and Teaching Schools

do not seek to be the school improvement capacity for all the schools in a city or district, as a local authority may have been previously. Exceed SCITT and Teaching Schools provides the school improvement capacity for formal partner schools/academies and multi-academy trusts that share the same values and ethos whom enter into a formal partnership to be providers and beneficiaries of peer support whilst contributing and shaping the development of the strategic and operational aspects of the partnership.

## **Summary of functions, roles, responsibilities and commitment for an effective school improvement partnership**

In the current educational landscape, these are the key requirements and needs for the partnership to be successful. Schools and MATs joining the partnership agree to support them:

### **Partnership**

1. Exceed SCITT and Teaching Schools have the sole purpose of facilitating social mobility through school improvement
2. Exceed SCITT and Teaching Schools primarily meets the school improvement needs of its formal partner schools and multi-academy trusts. If there is additional capacity, support will be accessible to other schools beyond the formal partners. Exceed SCITT and Teaching Schools are not a substitute of the local authority (whose functions that have evolved over time)
3. All formal partners and system leaders (NLE, NLG, LLE and SLE) are committed to developing and delivering a high-quality school-led system coordinated through Exceed SCITT and Teaching Schools
4. In establishing Exceed SCITT and Teaching Schools, Exceed Academies Trust and the Lead Schools risk their reputation and viability through, for example, school, MAT and initial teacher education (ITE) Ofsted inspections. Therefore, it needs to quality assure all the functions the SCITT, Teaching Schools, formal partner organisations and system leaders deliver in its name by partners

### **Capacity**

5. The SCITT and Teaching Schools facilitate school improvement for nursery, primary, secondary and special schools as well as alternative provision
6. Partner MATs and their schools need to commit to Exceed SCITT and Teaching Schools being the primary provider of school improvement capacity and to adding capacity to the Alliance's formal partners
7. Wider partnership for specialist provision that Exceed Teaching Schools may not be the best-placed provider of school improvement capacity, i.e. with a Maths Hub and Research School, are encouraged with the view to partners developing additional capacity to benefit other partners. Coordinating such wider partnerships with the Teaching Schools involvement will support opportunities for other partners to benefit
8. The growth of the Alliance is carefully managed. Spreading the SCITT and Teaching Schools' capacity too thinly would reduce the capacity of other partners' impact, organisational growth and/or financial viability. This has to be monitored by the CEO and Trustees of Exceed Academies Trust as the 'parent' organisation of the SCITT and Teaching Schools
9. Partners schools and MATs are committed to supporting and utilising the capacity, systems and processes of Exceed SCITT and Teaching Schools as their primary source of school improvement capacity. This avoids fragmentation of the system and maximises the impact of the support provided
10. Formal partners, especially MATs, will work with Exceed SCITT and Teaching Schools to support the long-term sustainable financial viability of their school improvement capacity

11. Exceed SCITT needs partners' full ITT capacity to ensure it is financially viable and, therefore, able to provide the high-quality ITE provision partners demand. Exceed SCITT has been established at the request of partnership Headteachers. Formal partners must, therefore, be fully committed to the development of Exceed SCITT in becoming the sole school provider of ITE for the partnership and in securing an 'Outstanding' judgement through inspection. Until there are sufficient training places allocated to the SCITT by NCTL to fully meet all partners ITE needs, partners must prioritise Exceed SCITT trainees in the provision of placements and high-quality support and training

## **Governance**

12. Nominated partner schools, system leaders and MATs help to steer the development of the SCITT and Teaching Schools' provision through the SCITT and Teaching Schools' governance structures;
13. There are two level of formal membership to the Teaching Schools Alliance: Strategic Partners and Alliance partners. Strategic Partners sit on the School Improvement Board. Alliance Partners are schools that benefit from and contribute to the delivery of the Teaching Schools' key functions, such as ITT, professional learning and research.
14. The School Improvement Board consists of the CEOs of partner MATs that have agreement for the Teaching Schools to provide the school improvement capacity for their Trust, plus the Headteacher of Teaching Schools' lead schools, representative system leaders, Head of Teaching Schools and Head of Initial Teacher Education. Bradford Council are also members of the Board
15. The governance structure for the SCITT includes a Steering Committee and Board. These consist of representatives from across the partnership
16. Partner schools and MATs (in forming a new MAT or when applying to sponsor other schools) may cite and utilise the school improvement capacity of Exceed SCITT and Teaching Schools once they have secured the approval of the CEO of Exceed Academies Trust, as the Accounting Officer, and Trustees
17. New converter or sponsored academies joining an Exceed SCITT and Teaching Schools formal partner MAT automatically join the Alliance as formal partners and align to the principles set out within this document
18. To safeguard the partnership, formal partners may be de-designated where the quality of provision or the capacity of the partnership is compromised or undermined, i.e. where there are significant concerns about the quality of ITT provision within a school (e.g. regular substantiated complaints by trainees); where partners do not add capacity to the Alliance or undermine the SCITT and Teaching Schools' financial viability and sustainability (e.g. aiding the *development* of another ITT provision over that of Exceed SCITT); where the Teaching Schools' brokerage of school-to-school support systems and processes are not used effectively (e.g. where support of more than two-days isn't brokered by the Teaching Schools' to add safeguards for the Alliance, schools and SLE/leader); and where the Teaching Schools' school improvement capacity is cited within applications to become a MAT without the consent of Exceed Academies Trust's CEOs. Equally, schools and MATs may opt to secure their school improvement capacity from another provider

## **System leaders**

19. The school improvement functions are primarily school-led and draw upon the knowledge, understanding and skills of experienced practising school and MAT leaders and practitioners first and foremost
20. The Teaching Schools designate system leaders from partner schools where they add capacity to the partnership and to recognise their provenance in being 'outstanding' leaders in their specialist area(s) to the benefit of the individual, the Alliance, their employing MAT and/or school

21. Where opportunities emerge for the SCITT and Teaching Schools, system leader deployments will be facilitated with the agreement of their Headteacher
22. Schools with system leaders designated by Exceed SCITT and Teaching Schools will refer all direct and indirect requests for support, whether funding is involved or not, of more than two-days to the Teaching Schools for it to broker. This adds some protection to the reputation of the SCITT, Teaching Schools, the system leader and their employer as well as enabling the system leader to focus on the provision of high-quality support
23. Exceed Teaching Schools' designated system leaders (LLE, SLE) can work in partnership with other Teaching Schools. But, this should be agreed with and brokered by Exceed SCITT and Teaching Schools prior to committing to such arrangements
24. The SCITT and Teaching Schools are focused on providing high quality support, not quantity. They, and the partners operating under their name as formal partners or designated system leaders, *must* demonstrate measurable impact in facilitating social mobility through school improvement through each deployment
25. The SCITT and Teaching Schools work in partnership to the mutual benefit of partner organisations within and beyond the 'home' city of Bradford

### **Evidence-based practice**

26. All aspects of the SCITT and Teaching Schools functions should be evidence-based, both based on professional experience and research
27. Schools commissioning or providing school-to-school support must draw upon evidence-based practice to ensure the focuses of the support will address the key issue and result in improved pupil outcomes

### **Quality assurance**

28. All school to school support will be quality assured by designated independent system leaders, e.g. LLEs, and/or a Higher Education Institute (HEI) partner over time

### **Further information**

29. Information on the systems and processes for the quality assurance of school-to-school support and associated financial arrangements are available to view online at [exceedacademiestrust.co.uk](http://exceedacademiestrust.co.uk)

## **Membership of the Exceed SCITT and Teaching Schools' Alliance**

We invite pro-active schools and multi-academy trusts that will contribute to the provision of school-to-school support to join our partnership for the benefit of their school(s) and those within the partnership first and foremost whilst being open to contributing beyond the partnership where there is capacity. The principles of this document set out the nature of this partnership. The partnership needs partners to contribute to all aspects of the SCITT and Teaching Schools' operation, not just one element (e.g. ITT).

By signing the Memorandum of Understanding, schools/multi-academy trusts become formal member of the Alliance and share in the strategic decision making and opportunities the SCITT and Teaching Schools present.

Headteacher/Principal/CEO: .....

Please print your name: .....

Organisation: .....

Chair of Governors/Trustee: .....

Please print your name: .....