



Strategic Plan 2026-2030

The Athelstan Trust

Caring, Collaborative and Excellent



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Introduction

This strategy sets out how The Athelstan Trust will continue to improve outcomes for pupils in our schools over the coming years. We will answer three questions:

Who are we?

Where are we going?

How will we know if we have succeeded?

Our strategy gives a clear direction and focus to ensure we are disciplined and principled in our approach. However, this strategy is not set in stone; we will continue to review and adapt our strategy in response to changing circumstances.

The strategy is underpinned by our vision, mission, values and strategic priorities, set by trustees. These ambitions have informed operational aims, plans, and performance indicators so that progress can be monitored.

The strategy is defined by calendar years, not school years, so that it can be reviewed and redefined each year to inform school improvement planning, which begins mid-way through the calendar year. A four-year timespan has been chosen as it allows three full school years of delivery, which is sufficient time to allow meaningful change to happen.

1. Who are we?

Our sense of place and tradition

Athelstan was the first King of England, around 1100 years ago. He united the Anglo Saxons and brought order, justice and stability to a nation. Athelstan was a scholar, known for his passion for learning, books and relics. Today, he inspires our love of learning, our unity, and our strong sense of place and history.

Our history

Since 2015, The Athelstan Trust has brought schools together from across Wiltshire, Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire towards a common goal: *to serve our communities by providing an excellent, inclusive education, every day.*

The Trust began as two secondary schools, working closely together to improve outcomes for children. Over the next 10 years, four more secondary schools, and four primary schools, joined, bringing deeper collaboration, diverse perspectives, and greater expertise.

Our schools

We educate over 5000 pupils in 10 schools with more than 850 staff. Our trust includes 6 secondary schools and 4 primary schools serving a range of communities, from the Forest of Dean to the market towns of Chippenham, Chipping Sodbury, Malmesbury and Tetbury, to rural villages, to the outskirts of Swindon.



**Gloucestershire
South Gloucestershire
Wiltshire**



**10
Schools**



850+ Staff



**5000
Pupils**



**100
Governors**

Each of our schools is inclusive by being open, accessible, and valuing individuality. We are ambitious for our pupils, supporting them to live fulfilling lives and play a valuable role in society.

Each of our schools maintains its own identity and tailors its offer to meet the needs of the school's community and the children who attend.

Our mission

We are a family of schools, rooted in our local communities, committed to:

- Empowering every pupil and colleague to fulfil their potential through high expectations, opportunity, and care.
- Valuing the distinctive character of each school while recognising that we achieve the most when we work together and support one another.
- Providing an inclusive and transformative education that nurtures talent, inspires ambition, and celebrates diversity.

Our values

We are:

Caring:

We create kind, inclusive communities where everyone feels respected, supported, and valued.

Collaborative:

We work together across our schools and communities, sharing expertise and supporting one another to achieve more.

Excellent:

We set high expectations, inspire ambition, and strive for excellence in learning, teaching, and every aspect of school life.



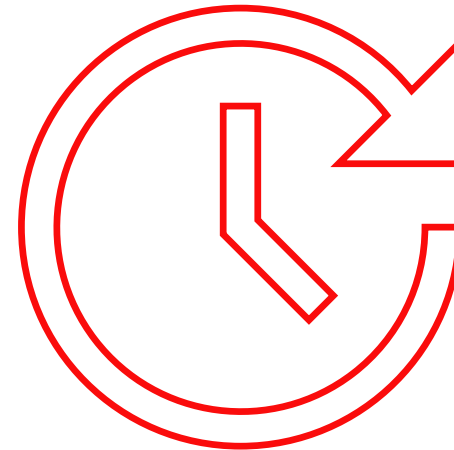
Where are we going?

Turning to the future

The Athelstan Trust is a growing, healthy and vibrant community of schools which holds true to its founding values and goals.

In 2025, as The Trust turned 10 years old, the trust appointed a new Chair of Trustees and CEO. At this moment of change, trustees renewed the values and vision for The Trust and agreed ambitious strategic priorities to reflect its size and ambition.

As a medium sized trust with over £50m income each year, we are developing our offer to schools and formalising systems and processes to ensure operational effectiveness, value for money, and high-quality central services. Growth has not come without its challenges. However, by holding true to our values – caring, collaborative and excellent – we come together as one trust to overcome complex challenges and continue to support schools in delivering an excellent quality of education for their pupils.



Vision

We aspire to be a trust where schools transform lives by creating opportunity for all, fostering ambition, and enabling every student and colleague to thrive.

Strategic Priorities

Our strategic priorities reflect our vision, values, mission, the emerging landscape for schools, and our assessment of where we are now. They articulate what is most important to us and are the foundations upon which our plans for improvement are built.



Education excellence that benefits all

We can only claim to deliver an excellent education if we achieve excellent outcomes for every pupil, no matter their starting point, background, need or aspiration. This is an inclusive education, and the principle should underpin all we do. It shows that we care about excellence for all.



One Trust, diverse schools

We are most successful when we pull in the same direction, with clear purpose and a common approach. This should not mean losing our identity or agency, rather that we are empowered to achieve shared goals; deliberately diverse, purposefully aligned.



Learning in our DNA

Excellence is a journey, not a destination. The pursuit of excellence is a collaborative endeavour in which we care enough to be honest, open, reflective and aspirational to ensure we are the best we can be. This culture must reverberate across our organisation.



First choice for parents, pupils and professionals

We should be a place where people benefit and belong. For children, this means schools that are safe, supporting, enriching, and academically strong. For adults, this means a professionally enriching environment where there are opportunities to progress and make a difference.



Organisational health and resilience

The Trust should make it easier for schools to be excellent. This means financial resilience, operational effectiveness, strong governance, mitigation of risk, well-managed estates and access to expertise.



Environmental commitment

The Athelstan Trust is committed to ensure its operations become increasingly environmentally sustainable. As such, the aims outlined above must be carried out with due regard to the environmental impact of change and trust leaders should look for opportunities to reduce the carbon footprint of The Trust.

Growth






The following criteria will be applied when considering trust growth:






1. Will it help the trust deliver on its mission and strategic priorities?
2. Is there a good fit between the school/s or trust/s and our trust's values, culture and vision?
3. Can the growth be achieved without detriment to schools already in The Trust?
4. Does The Trust have the capacity and expertise to support and challenge the school/s?
5. Is this the right time for growth?





2030 Goals

- Pupil **attendance** in every school will exceed national average.
- Pupil **progress** in each school will be above national average.
- There will be **no significant gaps** in progress for disadvantaged groups.
- No Ofsted categories across our schools will be less than **expected standard**.
- Our **inclusion** will be rated as being of a strong standard across schools.
- 90% or more of staff will deem their school to be **well led and managed**.
- All schools will be **financially sustainable**.
- 100% of senior school leaders will state that **the trust adds significant value** to the quality of education in their school.

Aims 2026-2028

Quality of Education						
Aim						
1	To improve the quality of Inclusion Bases including internal alternative provision .	✓				
2	To ensure that all pupils are appropriately stretched and challenged , and progress to high quality destinations	✓				
3	To implement a strategic response to the Government's White Paper on Inclusion to raise outcomes for vulnerable groups.	✓				
4	To develop Trust expertise in relation to improving attendance to inform school strategies.	✓				
5	To strengthen school self-evaluation practices to ensure school improvement efforts are well-directed and impactful.			✓		
6	To develop foundational skills through sharing effective strategies and provision.	✓				

People and Leadership						
Aim						
1	To develop an employee charter to attract and retain the best staff which secures a core entitlement for staff across schools.				✓	
2	To align practices and improve communication so that governance is seamless and consistent across The Trust.		✓			
3	To refresh the trust's identity and sharpen communications with key stakeholders , internal and external.				✓	
4	To develop the trust's ability to identify and nurture talent at all levels to secure expertise within The Trust.				✓	
5	To build a quality framework against which educational standards can be assessed.			✓		
6	To systematically gather and respond to stakeholder perceptions about the quality of education.			✓		
7	To extend the reach of the trust beyond its own schools to influence standards of education across Wiltshire, Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire.				✓	
8	To align key HR practices to achieve greater consistency across schools.				✓	

Finance, Estates and Operations						
Aim						
1	To align the vision, values, and strategic priorities with operations and decision making such that the organisation works towards shared goals and delivers improvement, delivering strategic cohesion		✓			
2	To identify opportunities to harness AI technology to enhance human learning and achievement and improve organisational performance and productivity.			✓		
3	To ensure all schools are moving towards a balanced and sustainable financial position .					✓
4	To align capital spending with the strategic priorities of The Trust.		✓			
5	To improve the capacity and effectiveness of the Central Team to better meet school's needs, including both educational and professional services.					✓
6	To develop standard operating procedures to support effective systems and processes.					✓
7	To improve risk management processes and culture.					✓

Our aims derive from the strategic priorities of The Trust and are organised under three strategic pillars: Quality of Education, People and Leadership, and Finance, Estates and Operations.

Each aim is delivered through work plans which detail how work will be implemented, both at strategic and operational level.

How will we know if we have succeeded?

Key Performance Indicators

Area	Measure	23/24 Actual	24/25 Actual	National average 24/25
Attainment and progress	% of pupils achieving a 'good' level of development in EYFS	79%	65%	67%
	% pupils passing phonics (Y1)	97%	83%	80%
	% pupils that meet expected standard in reading, writing and maths (Y6)	63%	58%	62%
	% pupils that meet greater depth in reading, writing and maths (Y6)	11%	16%	8%
	% disadvantaged pupils that meet expected standard in reading, writing and maths (Y6) (NOTE, very small cohorts)	50%	67%	47%
	% SEND pupils that meet expected standard in reading, writing and maths (Y6)	38%	67%	24%
	% of pupils achieving 9-4 passes on both English and maths (Y11)	65.7%	67.5%	64.5
	% of pupils achieving 9-5 passes on both English and maths (Y11)	43.5%	42.5%	45.2
	Trust-wide Attainment 8 (Y11)	45.5	46.5	45.9
	Trust-wide Progress 8 (Y11)	-0.05	n/a	n/a
	Trust-wide disadvantaged Progress 8 (Y11)	-0.52	n/a	n/a
	Combined average point score (Y13)	36.21	36.12	35.9
	Combined value-added (Y13)	0.15	0.19	0
Behaviour and Attendance	% of staff state that behaviour is generally good at their school	Past data not available		
	Primary attendance %	96.5%	96.1	94.8%
	Secondary attendance %	92.1%	91.9%	91.4%
	Primary persistent absence	5.3%	6.9%	13.5%
	Secondary persistent absence	20.3%	20.2%	24.3%
Satisfaction	% of school leaders who state that the trust adds significant value to the quality of education in their school.	Past data not available		
	% staff who state that their school is well led and managed			
	% parents who state that the school is well led and managed			
	% pupils who state that they feel safe at school			
	% of pupils who state they are making good progress in their learning			
Financial	Staffing as % income	78%	72%	79%
	Reserves as % income	2.7%	6.7%	7.74%
	Pupil-Teacher Ratio	15.54	17.07	17.78

The Role of the Local Governing Body

Local Governing Bodies provide a vital role through their links with local stakeholders. Their individual risk registers allow local risks and context to be fully understood, and this information will be used to inform Trustees.

Local Governing Bodies also capture the impact that the delivery of the goals and aims has at school level. They seek assurance of their effectiveness and alignment with School, Stakeholder and Trust expectations.



External Validation

Ofsted's inspection of schools provides The Trust with information about educational standards. Where required, this will be complemented by Trust commissioned audits and quality assurance by outside agencies.

Self-evaluation

Schools have robust self-evaluation processes which are quality assured by The Trust. The evidence upon which this self-evaluation is based includes benchmarked outcome data, quality assurance activity, and stakeholder voice.



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