



## Our People Strategy Executive Summary

Our People Strategy is fundamentally about building a strong, positive school culture where everyone – staff, children, and families – can flourish and do their best work. This strategy ensures we are creating an environment that supports our vision of sustainable excellence in each of our schools, understanding that a strong culture is intentionally built through shared commitment and effort. The strategy is underpinned by three core areas:

**PEOPLE:** This focuses on cultivating a thriving environment for all staff, recognising that our people are our greatest asset.

**PLACE:** This is about creating safe and inspiring physical environments where children excel, staff flourish, and communities take pride.

**PROCESSES:** This involves establishing well-researched, evidence-based practices that strengthen our culture and support high-quality education across all schools.

### THE POWER OF 'OUR'

The consistent use of 'OUR' throughout this strategy is a key element, designed to cultivate a unified, high-performing, and deeply connected community across all schools in The Stour Federation. For you, this means:

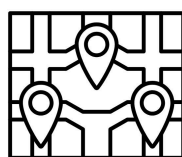
- **Shared Identity:** Fostering a sense of shared purpose and identity, so you feel part of something bigger than just one school.
- **Collective Ownership:** Empowering staff to take ownership of decisions, developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and fostering a sense of shared responsibility for the Trust's progress and the wellbeing of all.
- **Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing:** Emphasising collaboration so that "our best practice," "our resources," and "our shared expertise" are utilised, allowing staff to learn from each other and enhance their practice. This also means parents and the wider community are seen as partners.
- **Compassion and Support:** Building a culture of mutual support where staff feel valued, understood, and psychologically safe in their professional and personal growth.
- **Alignment and Engagement:** Reinforcing collective purpose so everyone is working towards shared goals, leading to enhanced job satisfaction, better staff retention, and improved performance.



### PEOPLE

We believe that by prioritising our staff's personal and professional growth and wellbeing, we are directly investing in the success of our children. This means:

- **Living Our Values:** We are committed to fostering a culture built on our RESPECT values: Relationships, Excellence, Service, Passion, Ethics, Collaboration, and Trust.
- **Developing Key Competencies:** Just as we equip children with the 6Cs (character, citizenship, collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking), we encourage staff to develop these skills, as they are crucial for effective teaching and leadership.
- **Strong Leadership:** We are committed to developing leaders who are experts in teaching and learning, supporting colleagues, and empowering staff by fostering trust and delegating decision-making. Our leadership approach is guided by the 7 Habits of Effective People, focusing on character, responsibility, and integrity.
- **Attracting and Retaining Talent:** We aim to be an "employer of choice" by enhancing the candidate experience and utilising a trust-wide induction programme. For existing staff, we focus on creating a positive, fair, and supportive work environment. This includes:
  - Prioritising wellbeing and reducing sickness absence.
  - Actively reducing workload through our Workload Charter and using technology to automate tasks.
  - Ensuring leaders receive mental health awareness training.
  - Ensuring staff feel valued, empowered, and have job satisfaction through regular surveys and coaching.
  - Providing a comprehensive benefits package.
- **Continuous Development:** We foster a culture of continuous improvement, including a coaching culture and evidence-informed professional development. Staff are supported through development reviews, career planning, and access to national qualifications and leadership workshops. Staff also have a choice in their professional development planning.



### PLACE

We recognise that the physical environment is vital for a flourishing learning community. This means:

- **Inspiring Environments:** Our school buildings are designed to be calm, orderly spaces that convey a message of value and belonging for children and staff.
- **Quality Resources:** Providing the best possible resources, with a priority on evidence-based investments in reading and technology, recognising their significant impact on learning.
- **Promoting Oracy:** Spaces are designed to promote dialogue and collaboration, nurturing communication and language skills (oracy) for all.
- **Celebrating Success:** Showcasing pupils' achievements and promoting diversity and awareness through displays.
- **Sustainability and Community:** Committing to sustainability and fostering strong links with our communities, including active engagement with parents.



### PROCESSES

Our processes are designed to strengthen our culture, recognising that a unified, research-informed approach is beneficial. This includes:

- **Aligned Autonomy:** We have consistent practices across the Trust, but also empower individual schools to adapt to their unique local contexts.
- **Consistent Curriculum:** A Trust-wide Teaching, Learning, and Curriculum Policy ensures high standards, while allowing schools to focus on content relevant to their local community beyond the National Curriculum.
- **Core Learning Support:** Established Trust-wide processes for reading, writing, and maths, informed by best practices, support high-quality instruction.
- **Safety First:** Our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and procedures are standardised collaboratively, ensuring children feel safe, which is a foundation of our culture.
- **SEND Provision:** Trust-wide procedures and evidence-based provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) ensure they have the support needed to flourish.

### THE STOUR FEDERATION WAY: OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

"The Stour Federation Way" outlines our 10 guiding principles for continuous improvement and mutual respect. These principles help us achieve our aim of everyone learning, growing, and succeeding together:

1. **Plan for the Future:** Making long-term decisions that benefit everyone and building strong relationships.
2. **Connect People and Processes:** Designing work to flow smoothly, improving productivity and morale.
3. **Balance the Workload:** Working at a steady pace, removing unnecessary tasks, and prioritising what truly matters.
4. **Standardise Our Work:** Striving for consistent, repeatable methods as a foundation for continuous improvement and innovation.
5. **Build in Quality:** Prioritising quality, checking work effectively, valuing feedback, and quickly addressing problems.
6. **Use Technology Wisely:** Utilising technology to support people and processes, not just for the sake of newness.
7. **Develop Strong Leaders:** Growing leaders from within who are role models, mentors, and coaches, building a culture of trust and accountability.
8. **Work with Our Partners:** Treating all partners (parents, supply staff, external professionals) as part of our team, seeking mutual benefit.
9. **Observe and Learn:** Solving problems scientifically by being curious, observing firsthand, and taking responsibility.
10. **Align Our Goals:** Ensuring clear direction by aligning goals at all levels and regularly reviewing work for improvement.

In essence, The Stour Federation is committed to nurturing an environment where everyone feels valued, supported, and empowered to flourish, leading to exceptional education for our children and a rewarding experience for all involved.