



A photograph of children in an art room. A young girl with blonde hair and blue eyes is in the foreground, wearing a dark blue school uniform with a yellow 'RFA' crest and a red apron. She is looking at the camera while holding a paintbrush over a large piece of paper with blue and black paint. To her left, another child is partially visible. In the background, there are shelves with art supplies and another child wearing a green apron.

Astrea Value Partners

The work of the Astrea Academy Trust is underpinned by five core Value Partners, which are equally applicable to pupils, staff and the work of the Trust itself.

Each pair of Value Partners is accompanied by a call for action in the form of a hashtag, which is used in verbal, digital and hard copy communications.

The Value Partners can be used as a measure of individual, school and Trust progress and as a guide to inform the direction of change.





Responsibility and Leadership



Individuals in the Astrea community are accountable for their own decisions and actions and are supported by strong leaders, while trailblazers are encouraged to develop skills and talents in others. The Trust has a strong commitment to developing and nurturing our own leaders. [#4equity](#)



Enjoyment and Innovation

We know that everyone learns best when they enjoy what they do and are in a position to follow their innate desire to achieve. Astrea pushes boundaries so that pioneering ideas are tried and tested and consequently our academies remain leaders in the advancement of teaching and learning methods. [#go4it](#)



Aspiration and Development



Every member of the Astrea community, from the youngest pupil to the oldest member of staff, is encouraged to cultivate opportunities to grow. We achieve excellence by being inspired to become the best we can be. The progress and well-being of pupils is our top priority, at the centre of every decision. [#Astreathestars](#)

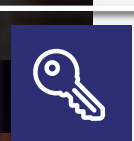


Collaboration and Inclusion

Astrea honours and applauds the differences that make us unique whilst actively seeking and celebrating the common ground that binds us together as a strong community. We work together in a productive environment where dynamic ideas are shared in partnership, so that every member of the community may thrive. [#all4one](#)



Honesty and Integrity



We are honest and open. Astrea decisions and responses are grounded in time-honoured moral principles that remain constant in the face of challenges and change. [#4good](#)





Building Effective and Sustainable MATs

While Astrea has demonstrated how to develop an effective and sustainable multi academy trust, it is clear that others have fallen short in this venture. Reform, a non-party research organisation that focuses on the delivery of public services, published *Education in Chains* in 2015. This publication considered research into what characterised MATs that had succeeded and failed in the recent past. Astrea has considered the findings of the report in the context of what has supported the high level of success of Astrea Academy Trust.

- ★ A relentless focus on the quality of learning
- ★ Clear governance structures
- ★ Capacity and affordability built through economies of scale
- ★ Talent management and professional development for all Trust functions – an effective operating model
- ★ Expert governance

Astrea has already put these principles into practice. New Trusts inevitably start small on day one. However, Astrea will have a strategic clarity of what they are aiming to build over the next five years. The staffing structures and operating models will be built up incrementally, to reflect affordability, as they grow into sustainable and self-sufficient MATs.



Focus on Quality of Learning



At the heart of the Astrea approach to education improvement is a relentless focus by every layer of the organisation on the quality of learning that is taking place in every classroom. This means that systems, procedures and relationships must ensure that we all know our academies. Those systems and processes include:

- ★ Professional development and support to ensure consistent standards and approach across the Trust
- ★ Agreed common timescales and methodology of assessment for effective progress monitoring
- ★ Common 'Assessment Without Levels' approach
- ★ Common risk management assessment and escalation procedures for education performance
- ★ Deployment of Regional Key Stage / Subject Leads to support academies
- ★ Joint accountability and responsibility of Directors of Education and Principal for the academies education performance
- ★ Moderated Trust Inspections to moderate on-going quality of provision assessment
- ★ Routine management analysis of performance by Regional Lead and the Headteacher / Principal
- ★ Common virtual education performance database deployed across the Trust to support interrogation and analysis of education performance
- ★ Education performance sub-committee of the Trustee's Board and eventually Regional Boards to focus on: education performance, risk assessment, and intervention strategies
- ★ Peer-to-peer support facilitated by the Trust
- ★ Capacity to intervene when necessary





Curriculum

Astrea academies have a curriculum that is values-led: It engages, motivates and inspires students, giving them opportunities to translate learning into real and relevant skills application. The Astrea curriculum prepares students for life and work and enables them to achieve their potential both academically and creatively.

Astrea takes an evidence-informed approach to curriculum development and innovation and teachers use evidence and data to be informed both in terms of pedagogy and outcomes.

The curriculum fosters the Astrea Teacher as a graduate professional rather than an “intellectual navy”, therefore the curriculum is owned by all teachers. It is designed on a macro-level by leaders but is designed on a micro-level every day by teachers and teaching teams in classrooms. Astrea academies determine the curriculum for their local and unique context and co-create best practice within the trust.

Astrea academies seek to cover the requirements of the National Curriculum as a minimum.

As stated in DfE guidance “all academies must offer a curriculum which is balanced and broadly-based and which:

- ✦ promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of students at the academy and
- ✦ prepares students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.”

Being academies, we have the autonomy to be innovative in our approach to the curriculum, for example in the areas of bespoke projects and qualifications, our approach to high-stakes assessment at Key stages 4 & 5 and our offer of enrichment activities.

As part of the Astrea family of trusts, we believe that there is a vital and substantial core curriculum that works across all types of settings. We ensure consistency of approach across all our schools through regional teams of teaching and learning specialists Directors of Education (Primary and Secondary), Deputy Director of Education, Director of Inclusion and Regional Leaders Maths, English, Science, who deliver training, carry out moderation, lead on “joint practice development” and curriculum innovation.



Astrea's vision is for all students in our academies to experience being "Inspired Beyond Measure"; as such we view the "curriculum" as a suite of five aspects:

Academic - Our Academic Curriculum Plan ensures learning and teaching reflect our vision and ethos. The starting point for learning is a positive ethos and climate of respect and trust based upon shared values across the school community, including parents. We believe that there is no contradiction within a curriculum that rigorously instills the basics of English and Mathematics whilst at the same time offering a broad range of learning experiences. Through our support for pedagogical excellence, we focus on engaging delivery of the curriculum so that students are excited by learning. This will include project-based learning as well as practical, experiential tasks. We are keen for students to develop a good understanding of their local context.

Thinking Skills and Growth Mindset - The way that we learn is emphasised in conjunction with what we learn and the belief that there is nothing that necessarily limits learning. We coach students to recognise when one mindset is producing self-limiting behaviour and enable them to "talk back" to this approach and foster an alternative which enables challenges to be overcome. In a similar way, "Thinking Skills" are mental processes we use to do things like: solve problems, make decisions, ask questions, construct plans, evaluate ideas, organise information and create objects.

Character Development - A high emphasis is placed on explicit opportunities to develop good attitudes to learning and on personal development. From significant amounts of time spent on the personal, social and emotional development of students through to discrete lessons on citizenship, and team building curriculum events such as residential journeys, our model systematically ensures students develop responsible attitudes toward themselves, others, the wider environment and society in general. We emphasise the "5 Cs" of character: Confident, Caring, Contributing, Committed, Courteous

Enrichment - Students of all ages deserve memorable and life-enriching experiences which will shape their character, develop their talents and build self-confidence. Participation in a wide range of activities beyond the academic curriculum is an essential part of the success of students. Enrichment links to our curriculum principles because it brings breadth to the students' educational experience, promotes enjoyment, brings additional challenge and allows for a more personalised experience.

Local, National and Global Perspectives - By recognising and planning learning around different experiences that are available, students come to understand the richness of learning opportunities in different contexts. We are innovative in our approach to building relationships with all possible learning partners in order that our students develop their understanding of the local, national and global community. Through this, our students are equipped to make an important contribution to community and wider cohesion.

"The world is the true classroom. The most rewarding and important type of learning is through experience, seeing something with our own eyes." **Anon**

Every school is individual, therefore our curriculum approach is trust-wide but with individual tailoring, giving our academies freedom to contextualise the five aspects. Crucially, the curriculum specifies a minimum (core) requirement for all academies, constituting the educational offer.



Operating Model

A Director of Education (Primary) and a Director of Education (Secondary) have a proven track record of school leadership and education performance improvement. They line manage the academy Principals in their sector and have a full-time team of key stage or subject leads to support academy development.



The management staffing structure for Astrea's operating model is shown overleaf.

A central team provides the key support services including financial, HR, payroll, estates, systems, communications, policy, governance support, project management and marketing. Central services also supply specialists to the regional teams such as a Regional Business Manager, Regional HR Advisor, Regional Estates Surveyor and Regional Governance Support. This approach ensures that multi-disciplinary regional teams consistently work with and support the academies in their region.





The operating model identifies those functions that are most effectively and efficiently managed centrally by the Trust and those that are most effectively and efficiently delegated to the individual academies. A detailed relationship between centrally managed and academy managed services is set out in the 'Central Services Specifications' at the end of this document. Trustees would review the delegation of services annually.

The capacity of the Trust must exceed its central service however. This capacity is built up through the development of effective academies that provide peer-to-peer support and challenge. Our purpose is to collaborate to meet the aspirations and needs of our pupils and students.



