

PONTEFRACT
ACADEMIES TRUST



STRATEGIC PLAN

2020-2022

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FOREWORD FROM THE CHAIR OF TRUSTEES



PHIL JONES
CHAIR OF TRUSTEES

I count it a privilege, as well as a responsibility, to chair the Board of Trustees of an organisation as important to our community as this one. As an education trust, we are in the business of running great schools for the children, families and communities that we serve. In our case, the fact that all of our schools are in the same town means that there is the potential for a lot of collaboration and mutual support, to help drive standards higher and higher.

The most influential people in all of this are the pupils, parents and teachers who work together every day to unlock young people's potential. As Trustees, our role is to support those efforts by making sure that the organisation that supports the schools, sets high standards and then builds and executes plans that will make them a reality.

I am delighted to reflect on the significant progress that our schools have made in the last year or so.

The improved academic results achieved by our young people are the clearest evidence of that and the trend of generally positive assessments that our schools have received from Ofsted, in the inspections that they have carried out, backs that up. This plan sets out to build upon that progress and we believe that there is much more that can be achieved.

My fellow Trustees and I have relished the opportunity to work with Julian Appleyard, CEO, and his team, as they have put this strategic plan together. Our focus is to provide a double edged challenge; on the one hand, we look to make sure that we are aiming high enough and on the other, we have to make sure that there is more to the plan than optimism – there has to be a realistic plan to deliver. The third key element of our role, where this plan is concerned, is to use it to hold the senior leaders to account, as they deliver.

We know that we will never reach the end of the improvement journey.

Our strategic plan is primarily intended to set out the flight path, as we see it for the next three years. As we work through the challenges that we have set for ourselves, no doubt we will find the need to adjust our course as we go. But what will not change, is a determination to deliver an education service to our communities that is second to none and to see our schools achieve outcomes that simply would not be possible, without the support provided by the Trust and their partner schools.

Thank you for taking the time to look through our plan. I hope that we can count on your support as we deliver it.

CEO OVERVIEW

This three-year strategic plan confirms the Trust's priorities for the period 2020-2022. It provides stakeholders with a high-level overview of what they can expect to be delivered over the next three years. The plan is reviewed by the Trust Board, with the Executive Leadership Team allowing Trustees to have a clear overview of work being undertaken and any areas of risk. What sits beneath this plan, is a one-year operational plan. The operational plan outlines the deliverables and actions identified for academic year 2019/20 – year one of the three-year strategic plan.

The academic year 2019/20 sees the Trust having moved forward. Inside 12 months, Carleton High School has been removed from special measures and is now an Ofsted rated "good" school. This is the first time that the school has been graded good by the regulator in 10 years. In our primary schools, we have seen high impact performance, with the best SATs outcomes ever delivered by the Trust. Individually, all six primary schools achieved their highest ever attainment figures in meeting the national standard for reading, writing and maths. This performance placed three of our primary schools in the top 10 schools out of the 101 in the Wakefield Local Authority. Carleton Park J & I School was the highest attaining school for maths. It was also placed second out of the 101 schools in combined outcomes for reading, writing and maths.

In 2018/19 all schools explicitly focused on the first phase of our transformation programme; restoring the basics and fixing many of the legacy performance issues. As Ofsted acknowledged, the pace of change has been "breathtaking". It has been gratifying to see staff embrace the changes and rise to the challenge, whilst demonstrating an ability to be self-critical. Our heightened expectations are more consistent across the Trust and the outcomes achieved reflect this. We are not there yet but there are significant green shoots. That said, we still must drive greater consistency in delivery across all of our schools. The year has taught us about what works well and which initiatives have been effective. It has also taught us where we can do better.

Our challenge remains to improve outcomes for all but specifically for disadvantaged pupils. In a socially just society, all children must have a fair chance to learn and thrive. We have made strides but not enough and we do not want our children and young people falling through the cracks.

In 2018, we refreshed our vision, mission and guiding principles as a Trust and this year we will continue to embed the new organisational culture across our eight schools. We have made a strong start in aligning the various aspects of the Trust – the goals, the culture, teaching and learning, performance management and accountability systems.

This alignment will continue. Additionally, we will continue to embed our guiding principles through developing our staff, teachers and leaders. This means being serious about the development of future leaders and succession planning. Providing our people with the right opportunities will develop leadership capacity across our schools.

As part of the culture change process, the Trust Board embarked on a review of governance models. We introduced new terms of reference for our local governing bodies, now called School Performance Review Boards (SPRBs), and reshaped our scheme of delegation.





Our challenge is to now ensure that all of our SPRBs are fully effective. We aim to further develop our local boards so that they can provide the appropriate level of independent challenge to the schools. In this way, they can stringently and systematically hold the schools to account.

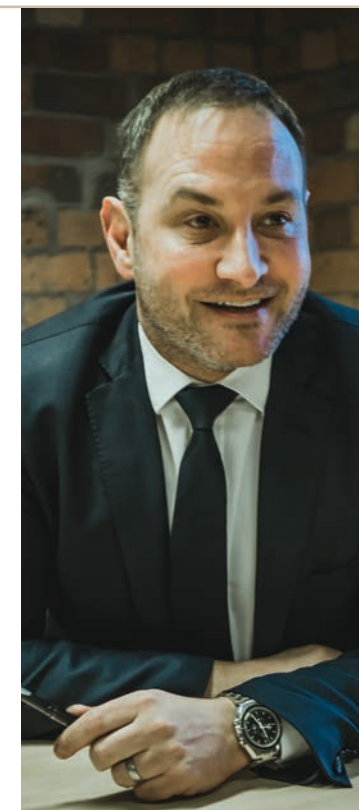
The central services and infrastructure that underpins our core business has been subject to change. Human Resources, Finance, ICT and Estates are all functions that we have started to align and centralise. The alignment and centralisation of back office functions brings economies of scale, financial gains and greater flexibility. Importantly, it frees up our school leaders to focus upon driving up standards in their schools and not be distracted by non-core activities that can be dealt with by specialists. Despite the Trust being in existence for five or six years, these areas are still in their relative infancy and have not reached their full potential yet. This area remains a major priority and we aim to continue to remove distractions from our leaders and teachers, so that they can deliver on our mission.



Phase one of the Trust transformation programme continues in to this academic year. We must ensure that outcomes for pupils continue to build on the success of 2018/19. The key word here being embed. The big changes across the Trust were carried out last year and in 2019/20 we will focus on embedding our systems to bring about greater consistency and sustainability. Examples of this will be in the way that we tweak our teaching and learning and school improvement models, and deepen our quality assurance systems.

All of these were new and Trust wide last year and will remain the cornerstone of what we do. The new Ofsted framework gives us the opportunity to build upon the exciting developments in our primary curriculum and link this with our work in Key Stage 3. This will be underpinned by the primary reading strategy that we launched last year.

Trustees, leadership and staff across all of our schools acknowledge that 2018/19 was one of major change for the Trust. We move forward this academic year by building on the pillars that we have put in place. In doing so and in tackling the objectives in this strategic plan, we have several advantages. Firstly, the Trust has seen tangible success in outcomes in 2018/19 and this has boosted the confidence of our people. Secondly, there is a growing appetite throughout the organisation for change and self-improvement. Thirdly, the uniqueness of the Trust's make-up; consisting of two secondary schools and six feeder primary schools, presents a great opportunity for the Trust to take a holistic approach to pupils' education across all phases. By doing so, we can ensure a smooth transition for our children from the early years through to secondary school, so that all of our pupils leave at 16, well equipped for the next phase of their lives.



**JULIAN
APPLEYARD** OBE
CEO

A background image of a classroom with students in school uniforms. The image is overlaid with a dark blue semi-transparent filter. The students are sitting at desks, and some are looking towards the camera. The text 'MISSION' and 'VISION' are placed over the image in white boxes.

MISSION

Running top-quality, high-achieving schools that give our children and young people the chance in life they deserve.

VISION

Where every child and young person makes outstanding progress.

A focus on social justice

We are determined to have, at the centre of our work, the need to give every child and young person in our schools, a fair chance to learn and thrive. As a family of schools, we believe that this will come through equipping them with a strong set of qualifications and the experience of life enhancing opportunities, in areas such as the arts, sport and travel. It is our job, as an education trust, to pick up an important role for social equity and not allow poverty of ambition to get in our way.



Creating a culture of high performance

We are looking to create a strong organisational culture in our schools that helps all of our children, young people and staff achieve even better outcomes. The insistence on high expectations, combined with the right ethos and culture is important.

We want all of our schools to have a commitment and focus so that all pupils know that there is no hiding place for second best, and that we combine high expectations with warmth and compassion. A culture of compassionate rigour is something that all of our schools strive to embed.

Healthy competition and outcomes-focused collaboration

As a Trust and a family of schools, we are comfortable with the word 'competition'. We aim to improve the educational outcomes and experiences of our children and young people. The reality is that if we do not do this as well as other organisations in our sector, then understandably we have questions to answer. We understand that in the sector in which we operate, comparisons are made and we embrace accountability. In this way, we avoid the enemy of complacency.

We also appreciate that competition can be counter productive. That is why we believe in collaboration. Collaboration is essential in driving up standards for all. Our schools now collaborate in a purposeful and outcomes-focused way. Leaders at all levels meet with a focus on solutions to common issues and to challenge each other. We have no desire to collaborate for collaboration sake. Leaders and teachers strive to collaborate inclusively but with a focus upon outcomes and improvement.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES



ACHIEVEMENT WITHOUT EXCUSES

We have an unwavering focus on achievement. This is paramount so that all of our children and young people enjoy greater life chances.

We take responsibility for ensuring that they succeed. We own our own performance and do not rest on our laurels or seek to blame others.



"The trust has been instrumental in driving these improvements at a dizzying pace. Sensible decisions have been taken to improve the school's leadership, behaviour, teaching and curriculum."

Ofsted 2019

01

GUIDING PRINCIPLES



Ofsted

"The leadership of teaching and learning goes from strength to strength. Teachers are full of praise for the training that is helping them improve their teaching."
Ofsted 2019

OUR PEOPLE MATTER

We know that our people make a difference to the lives of our 3 - 16 year olds. We want to make our schools places where great teachers want to teach, lead and build a career. Investment in the recruitment, development and retention of the best people is a top priority.

We aim to provide professional working environments, where our people have the support and the tools to do a great job, and push our children and young people to scale new heights in a safe and secure environment.

02

GUIDING PRINCIPLES



Ofsted

“Leaders’ resolute actions have improved the quality of teaching rapidly. They monitor the quality of teaching and learning with precision and identify what is working well and what needs to be done so that it improves.”

Ofsted 2019

EXCELLENCE AS STANDARD

We set high standards. “Good enough” is simply not. We do not accept second best from our pupils or ourselves.

The Trust aims to be a highly reliable school improvement organisation that is disciplined in its approach to improving performance. A Trust with clear plans and, simple and precisely executed systems, that not only develops and sustains excellent performance but never stifles individual flair.

03

GUIDING PRINCIPLES



PUPILS COME FIRST

Our schools are run for the benefit of children and young people, not the ease of adults. Their achievement comes first and staff in schools and the central trust office work to this end.

The Trust aims to keep low priority tasks away from front line teachers and leaders so that they can focus explicitly on our core business of teaching and learning.

Ofsted

"The CEO leads with vigour and promotes a strong moral purpose. He puts children first. As a result, he, alongside other trust leaders, has ensured that difficult decisions have been made quickly and pupils' education is the best it can be. Under the current leadership structures at the school, pupils thrive."

Ofsted 2019

04

GUIDING PRINCIPLES



STRONGER AS ONE

We take collective responsibility for each other and the results of all of our children and young people. We enjoy sharing our success as a Trust, while recognising the strengths of individuals and each school. To this end, collective accountability is rooted in a “if one fails we all fail” mentality.

As a family of schools, we collaborate with each other, challenge each other and share best practice. We do not let competition get in the way of our desire to get the best outcomes for all.



“Leaders in both the trust and the school have made very sensible decisions to align their curriculum with that of the other secondary school within the trust. This ensures that teachers’ expertise can be pooled. Collaboration is key and helps to make sure that the curriculum offer is broad, balanced and increasingly meets the needs and interests of pupils.”

Ofsted 2019

05

PONTEFRACT ACADEMIES TRUST

AT A GLANCE

3,751

children in
the Trust

6

primary
schools

1,781

primary
pupils

16%

primary free
school meals

507

employees

2

secondary
schools

1,970

secondary
pupils

15%

secondary free
school meals

Ofsted

Judgements

Carleton High School

Good - July 2019

The King's School

Good - June 2017

Carleton Park J & I School

Good - July 2019

De Lacy Pontefract Primary School

Good - April 2015

Halfpenny Lane J, I & N School

Good - February 2019

Larks Hill J & I School

Good - June 2019

Orchard Head J, I & N School

Good - November 2019

The Rookeries Carleton J, I & N School

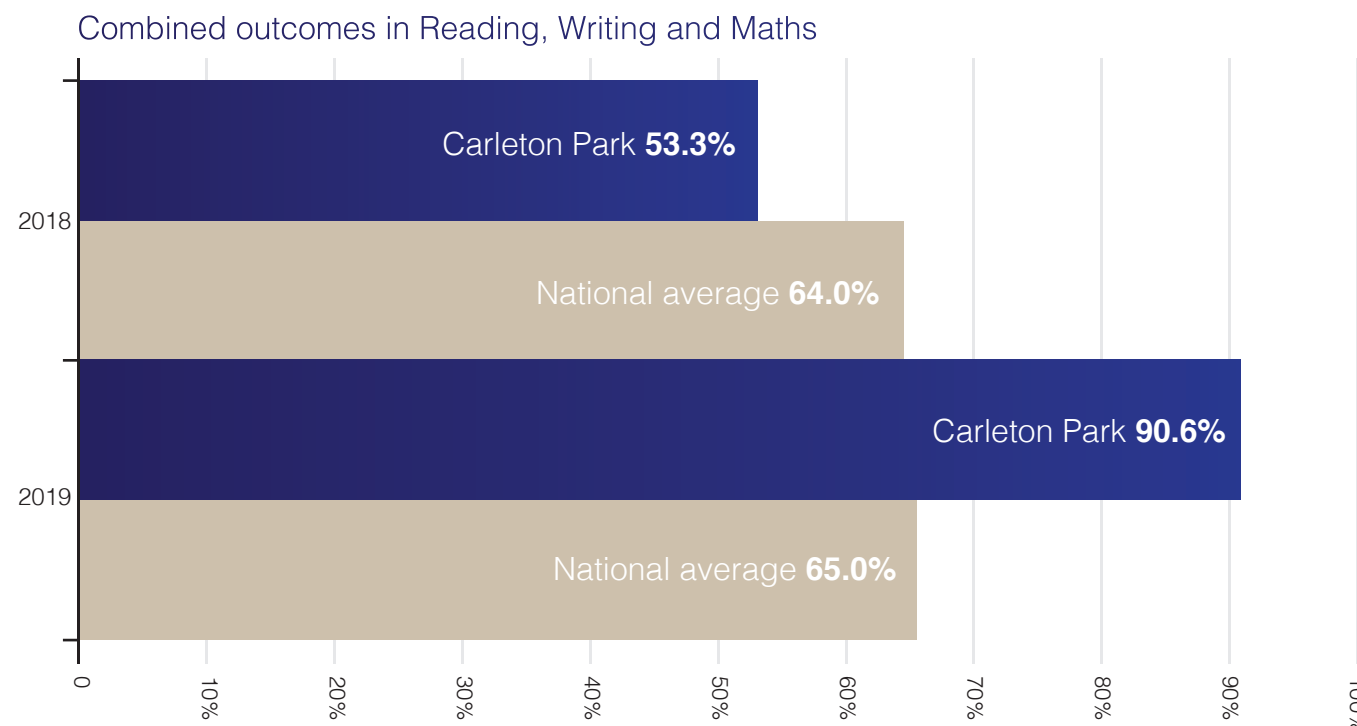
Requires Improvement - March 2019

PRIMARY SCHOOL PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS 2019



CARLETON PARK

JUNIOR & INFANT SCHOOL



37.3%

Performance
increase on
last year

25.6%

Above
National
average

Carleton Park is now the 2nd highest attaining school of the 101 in the Wakefield Local Authority. In 2018 it was 79th. It was also the **highest attaining school for maths outcomes** out of all of the 101 primary schools in the Wakefield Local Authority.

Ofsted - Good

"The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. The behaviour of pupils is truly special at this school. A significant majority of pupils demonstrate exemplary behaviours. One pupil commented to inspectors, 'I love coming to school. My teacher makes my day brighter'."

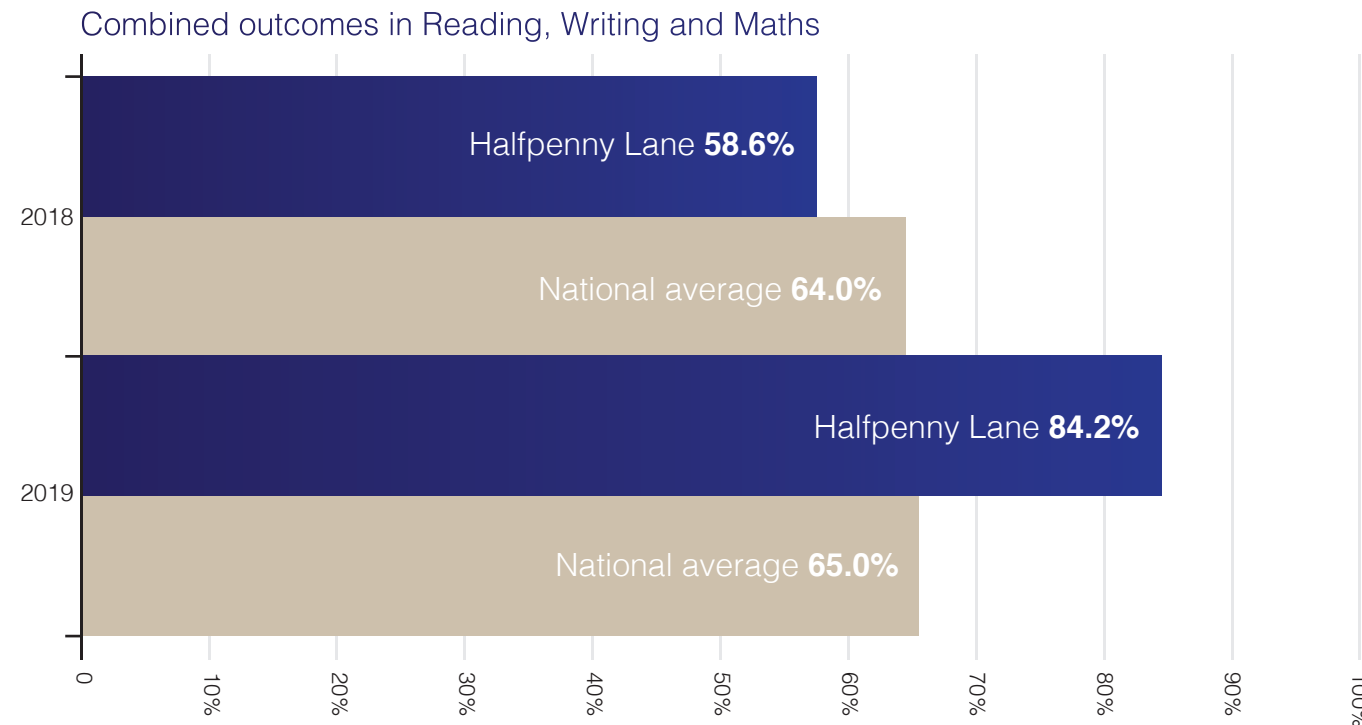
Ofsted 2019

PRIMARY SCHOOL PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS 2019



HALFPENNY LANE

JUNIOR, INFANT &
NURSERY SCHOOL



25.6%

Performance
increase on
last year

19.2%

Above
National
average

Halfpenny Lane is now the **9th highest attaining school** in the Wakefield Local Authority – it was 57th in 2018.

Ofsted - Good

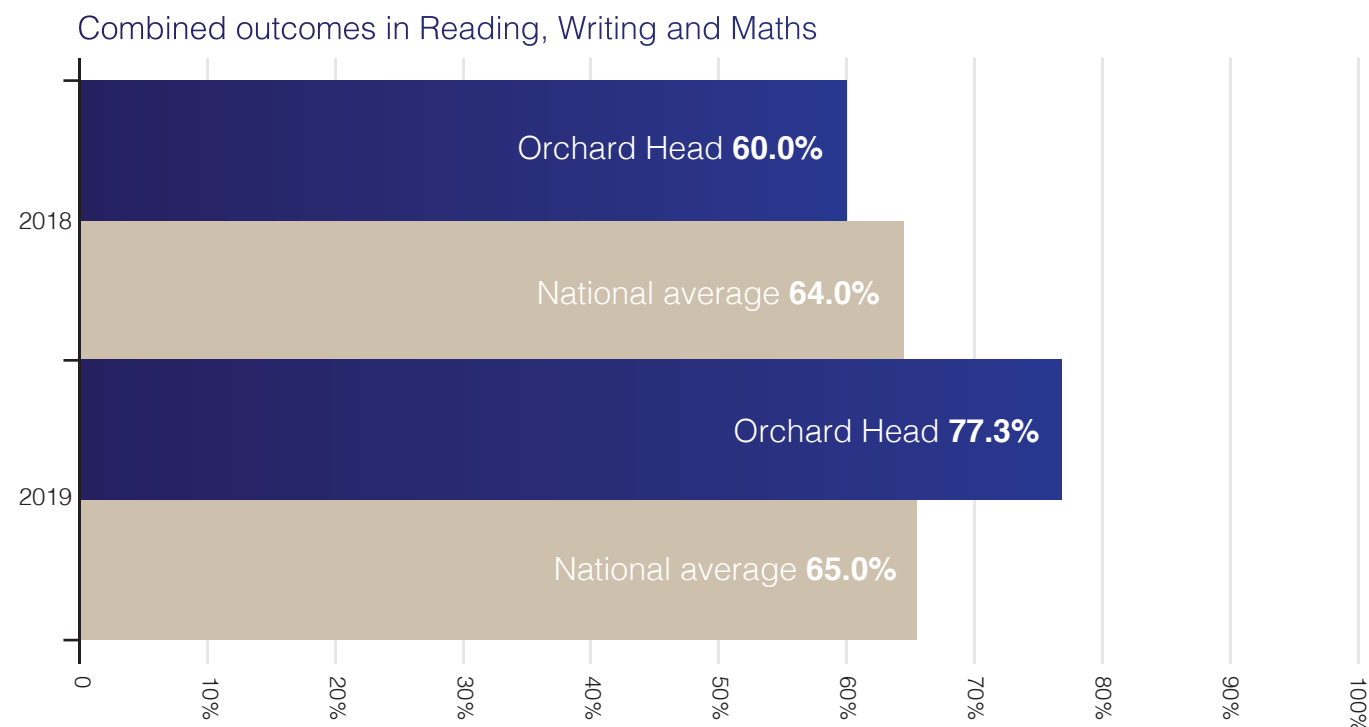
"The head of school has worked successfully to raise expectations and create a culture where all pupils can thrive."
Ofsted 2019

PRIMARY SCHOOL PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS 2019



ORCHARD HEAD

JUNIOR, INFANT &
NURSERY SCHOOL



17.3%

Performance
increase on
last year

12.3%

Above
National
average

Orchard Head have enjoyed a **17.3% improvement** placing the school **well above the National average**.

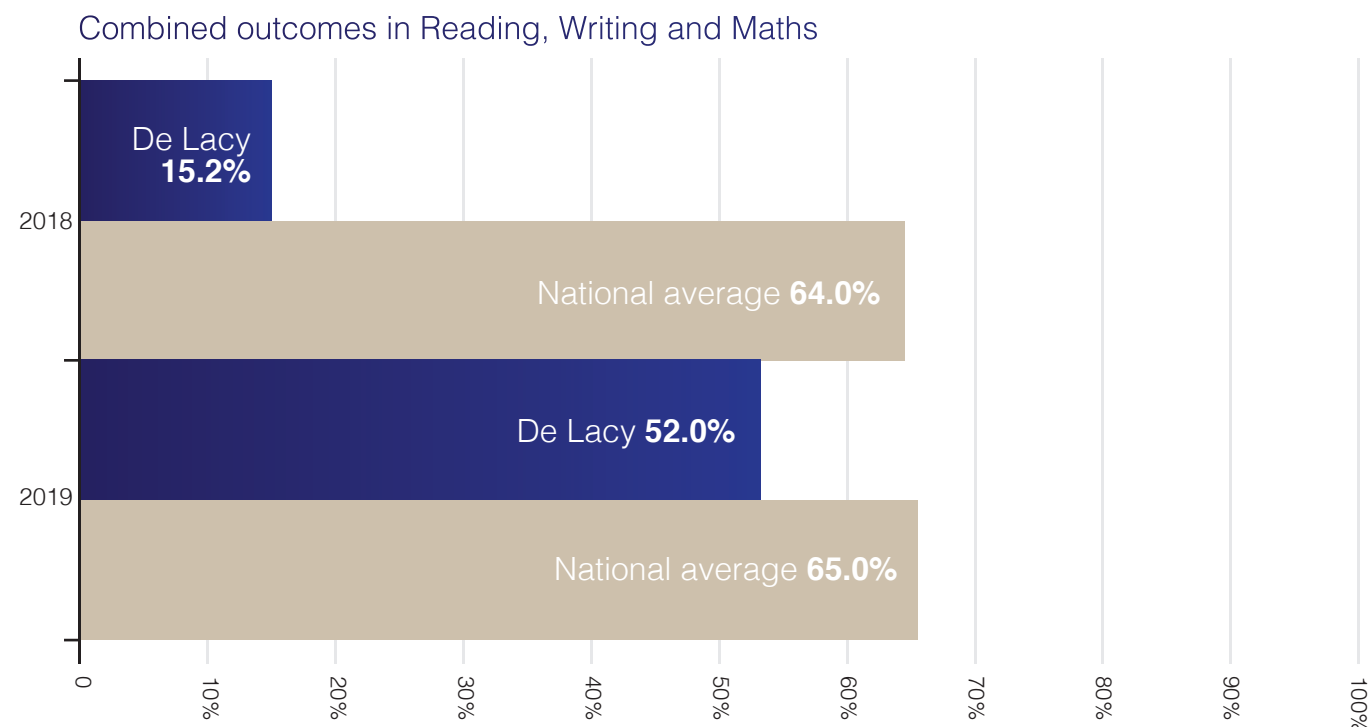
 **Ofsted - Good**

"Pupils are happy and enjoy school. They are well behaved and engaged in lessons."
Ofsted 2019

PRIMARY SCHOOL PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS 2019



**DE LACY
PONTEFRACT**
PRIMARY SCHOOL



36.8%

Performance
increase on
last year

De Lacy has seen their achievement rise from 15.2% to 52%. To place that in context, in 2018 seven children achieved the national expected standard in Reading, Writing and Maths - this year that number has increased to 23.

Ofsted - Good

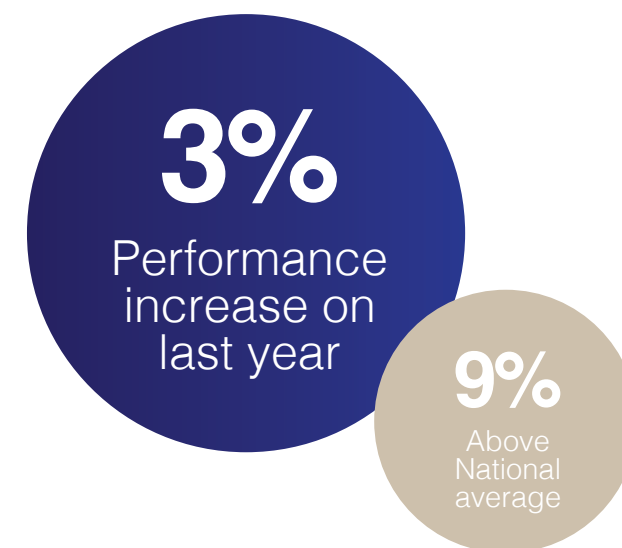
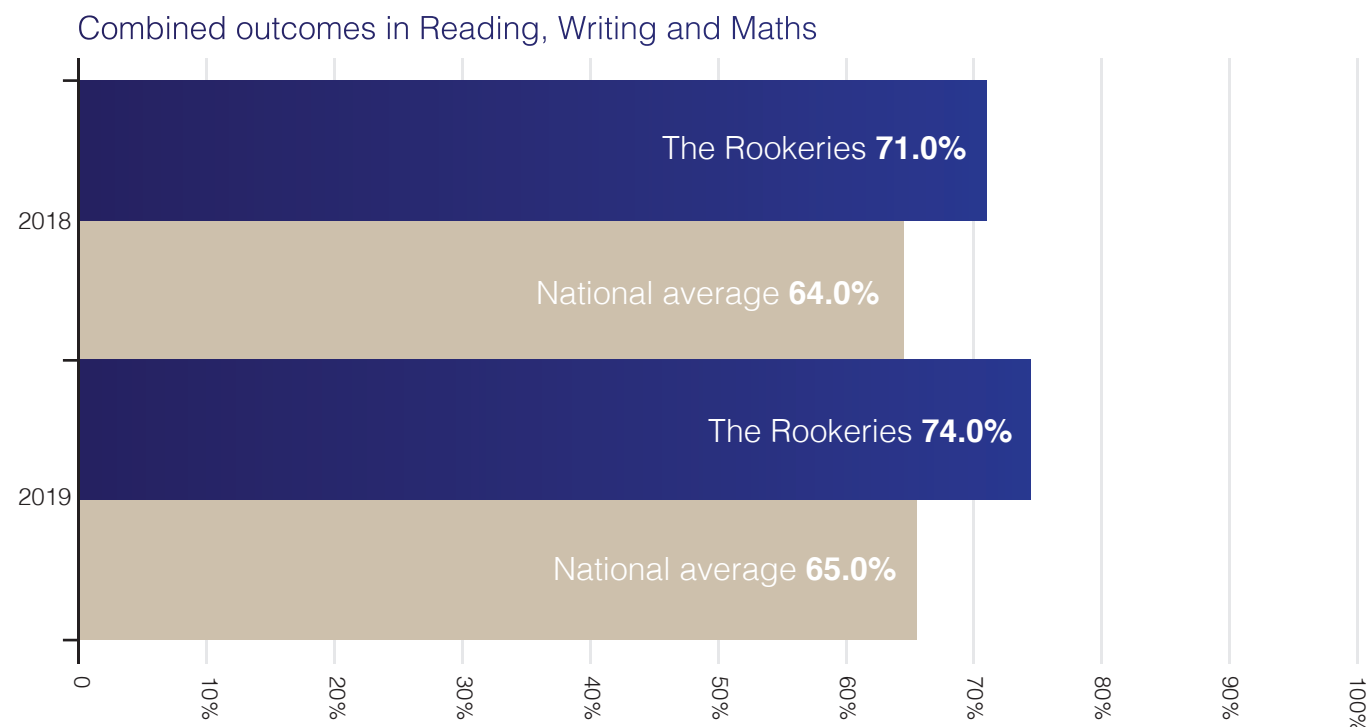
"The school's range of subjects and other activities meet the needs of pupils well. The curriculum is well organised. It gives priority to widening pupils' horizons and raising pupils' own ambitions as well as accelerating their progress."
Ofsted 2015

PRIMARY SCHOOL PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS 2019



THE ROOKERIES
CARLETON

JUNIOR, INFANT &
NURSERY SCHOOL



The Rookeries has its **best ever outcomes** to reinforce their **consistent above National average performance**.

 **Ofsted - Requires Improvement**

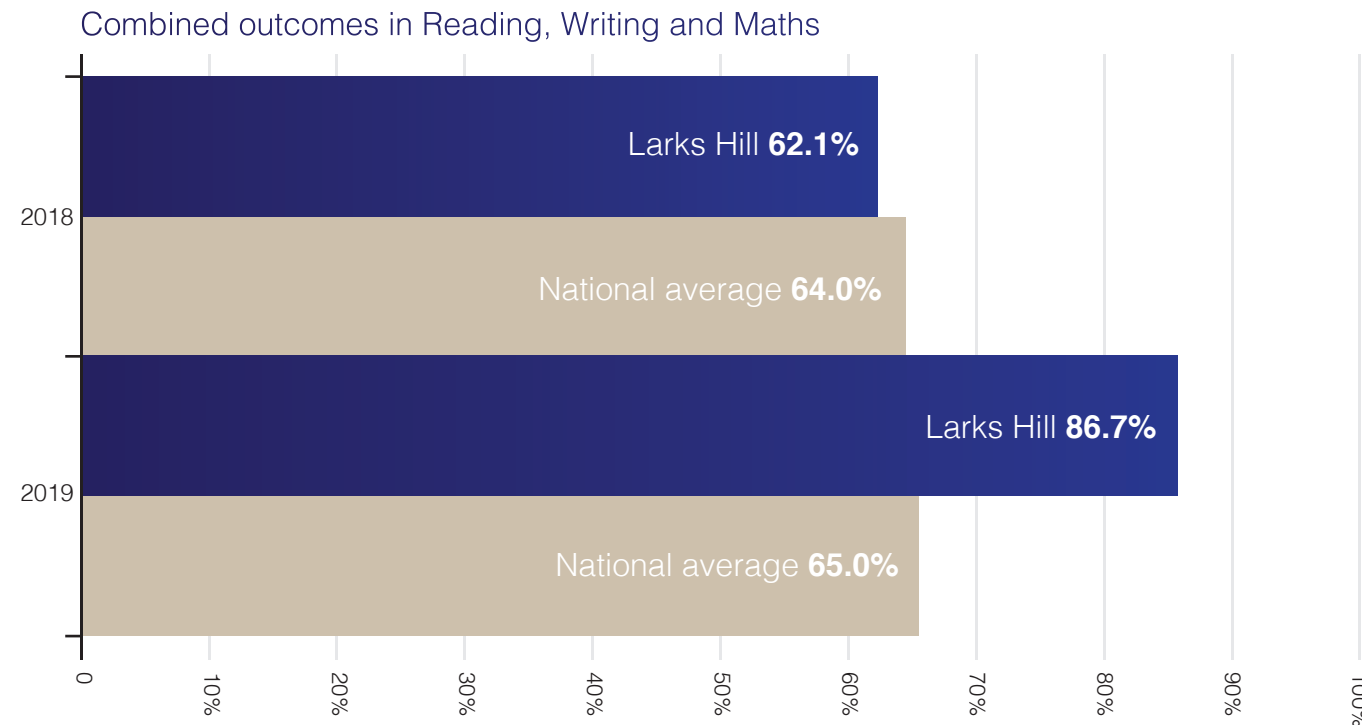
"The appointment of new senior leaders within the trust has been instrumental in ensuring that improvements to the quality of teaching are now happening at a more rapid pace."
Ofsted 2019

PRIMARY SCHOOL PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS 2019



LARKS HILL

JUNIOR & INFANT SCHOOL



24.6%

Performance
increase on
last year

21.7%

Above
National
average

Larks Hill's combined outcomes for meeting the national expected standard in Reading, Writing and Maths has placed the school as the **4th highest attaining school in the local authority** – it was 47th last year.

 **Ofsted - Good**

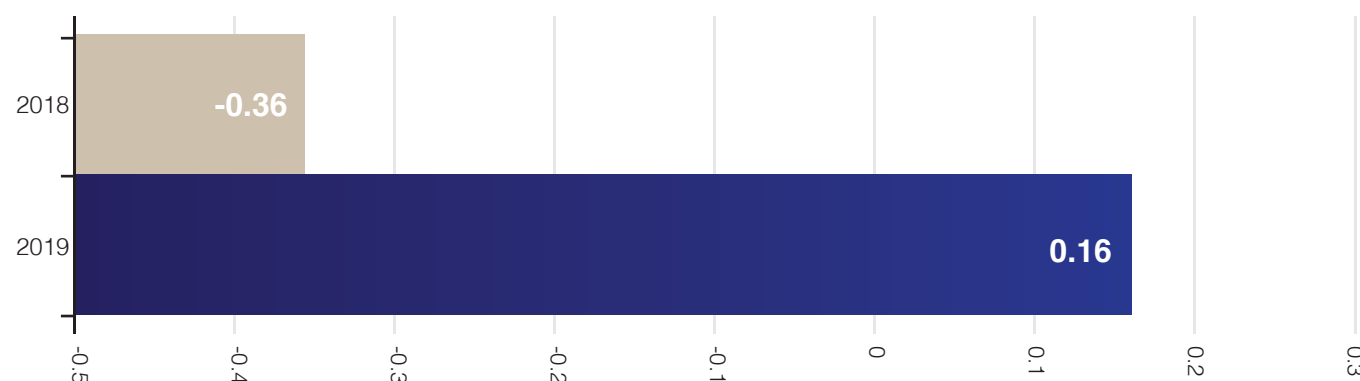
"Pupils behave well and demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning. Classrooms buzz with excitement and activity. The school's ethos of developing pupils' skills by cooperating and supporting each other permeates the school."
Ofsted 2019

SECONDARY SCHOOL PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS 2019



**CARLETON
HIGH
SCHOOL**

PROGRESS 8



Carleton High School was graded as **good by Ofsted** in July 2019. This is the first time that the school has received a good rating by Ofsted since 2009.

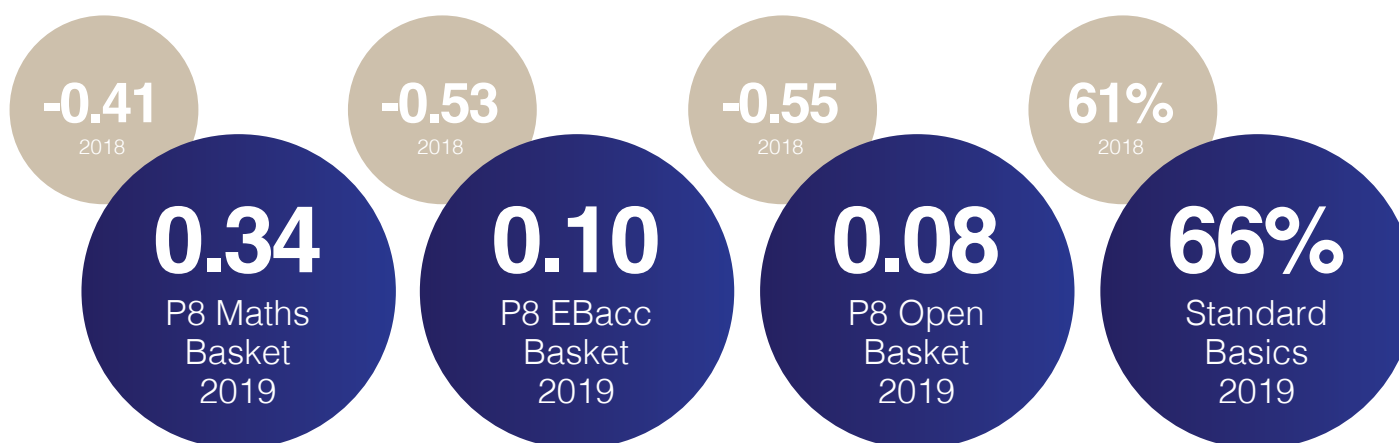
Pupils at Carleton High School achieved nearly **half a grade higher** per GCSE subject than the previous year.

Maths progress at Carleton High School has seen pupils in 2019 achieve **¾ grade per pupil higher** - transformational progress in one year.

The school ranks **4th out of the 18** secondary schools in the Wakefield Local Authority on progress measures.

Ofsted - Good

"Leaders have significantly improved the school since the previous inspection. Accountability for improving pupil achievement is a golden thread that runs through the work of the school."
Ofsted 2019

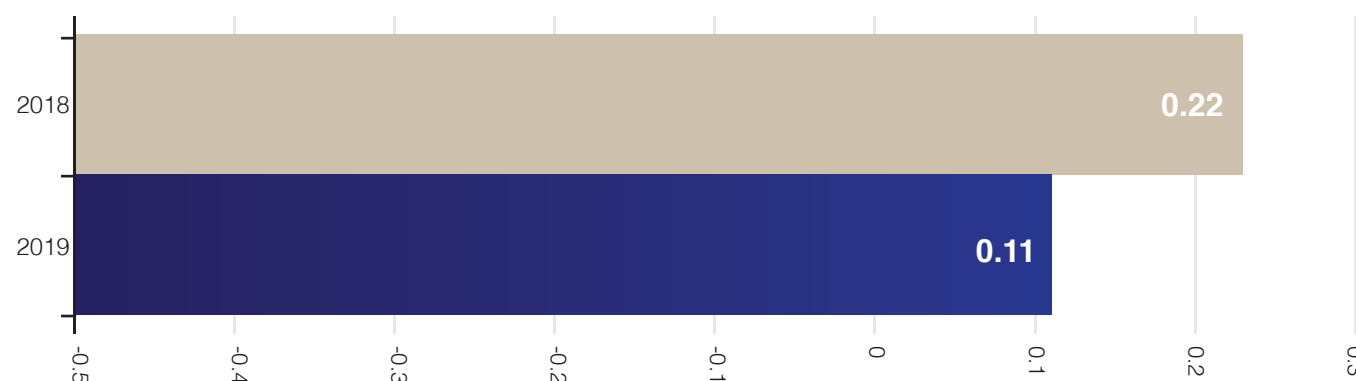


SECONDARY SCHOOL PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS 2019



THE KING'S
SCHOOL

PROGRESS 8



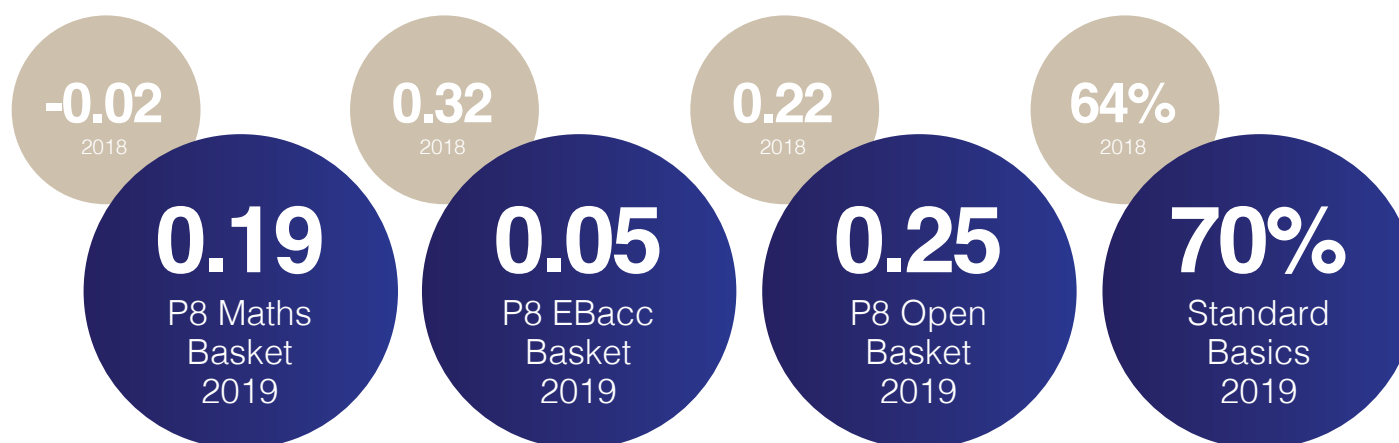
The King's School achieved their **best ever attainment with 70% of pupils** achieving 5 or more passes at grades 9-4 in English and Maths.

The King's School also achieved their **best ever strong basics attainment with 43% of pupils** achieving 5 or more passes at grades 9-5 in English and Maths.

The school ranks **5th out of the 18** secondary schools in the Wakefield Local Authority on progress measures.

Ofsted - Good

"The curriculum is well planned. It offers a broad and balanced range of subjects while catering for pupils' interests and aptitudes. Pupils are encouraged to set high expectations for themselves when choosing their options."
Ofsted 2017



TOP IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES ACADEMIC YEAR 2019/20

Each of the schools in the Trust have their own internal self-evaluation schedule and school improvement plan. All schools self-evaluate their current performance against the Ofsted framework and against national performance and accountability measures.

School leadership teams, with the support of Trust leaders, identify their improvement priorities and our School Performance Review Boards and Trustees, challenge our schools to ensure that there is a drive towards continuous improvement.

Our family of schools have different improvement priorities, depending on what stage they are at on their school improvement journey.

There are a number of improvement themes that are Trust wide priorities and these are shown opposite.





Develop and implement new cross phase curriculum plans



Implement and embed the new primary reading strategy



Improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils across all schools



Continue to improve the attendance levels of all pupils

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Strategic Objectives	Success Criteria
1. Achievement without excuses	
1.1 Deliver academic results that put all secondary schools on a trajectory to be in the top 10% of schools nationally for progress with all significant groups (including disadvantaged pupils and SEND) in the top 25%.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KS4 Progress 8 for all pupils. • Supported by secondary education targets.
1.2 Deliver improved academic results so that all primary schools achieve the expected national standards in reading, writing and maths at KS2, with most schools achieving above.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KS2 attainment and combined progress score for all pupils. • Supported by primary education targets.
2. Our people matter	
2.1 Ensure that our schools are highly inclusive and support the well-being of all pupils characterised by high levels of pastoral support, behaviour, welfare, safety, security and attendance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National performance indicators in behaviour and attendance. • Supported by primary and secondary education targets.
2.2 Embed high calibre leadership at all levels in the Trust through development programmes that are aligned with our vision, values and guiding principles, and that continue to drive improvement in standards and growth in the Trust.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust wide leadership development programmes in place. • Successful modelling of Trust leadership behaviours, evidenced through performance management. • MAT to MAT peer review of leadership. • Supported by primary and secondary education targets.
2.3 Embed and further develop teacher improvement programme(s) that are stage appropriate to further up skill our teaching staff and continue to embed a Trust wide teaching and learning model that shares and develops teaching excellence and addresses variability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typicality of teaching measured at 80% good or better. • Teaching and learning infrastructure in place and evidencing impact. • Supported by primary and secondary education targets.
2.4 Position the Trust as an employer of choice through a recruitment and retention strategy that attracts and retains the best people.	<p>Improved staff engagement and capacity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced short and long-term absence (%). • Improved successful training experiences (%). • Staff turnover (%). • Vacancy fill rate (%).
3. Excellence as standard	
3.1 Position all of our schools to be rated as at least good by 2020, as characterised by the new Ofsted Education Inspection Framework.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The progress of good schools in becoming outstanding. • The progress of schools that require improvement and need to be good by the time of the next inspection. • External validation of school self-evaluation versus the Education Inspection Framework.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Strategic Objectives	Success Criteria
3.2 Operate an effective financial strategy ensuring long term viability, the ability to invest in current resources (staffing and physical) and the ability to provide support to a future school joining the Trust.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To achieve financial characteristics within national threshold ranges. To maintain a minimum reserve of £1 million. To deliver efficiencies in the revenue budget to release funding to support investment in maintaining and enhancing learning environments. To implement agreed internal audit recommendations within agreed timescales. To maintain a clean bill of external audit.
3.3 Further embed a Trust wide management framework that includes a Board approved Strategic Plan that cascades efficiently and effectively into each individual school improvement plan, the performance and appraisal of our people, and the management reporting arrangements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Framework in operation that links the strategic plan to school improvement plans, through to individual performance assessment. Standardised risk management approach in operation.
4. Pupils come first	
4.1 Reinforce the priority of our frontline teachers creating high quality learning environments and school estates for our children and young people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three-year estate strategy in place that supports the Trust vision and the DfE and EFSA "Good Estate Management for Schools Guidance". Robust estate management self-assessment profile (in line with DfE guidance documents).
5. Stronger as one	
5.1 Embed and further develop improved arrangements by which school leadership teams are held to account by local stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectiveness and RAG rating of SPRBs. Training and development programme for all SPRBs and Trust Board in place. Positive external review of governance by National Leaders of Governance. Admissions and capacity of schools: (enrolment vs capacity, 1st preferences vs capacity, acceptances vs capacity).
5.2 Position the Trust for growth in the short and medium term through building capacity in advance and future proofing our centralised function/services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop community engagement strategy. No vacancies on SPRBs. SPRB fully recruited to with members with appropriate skills. SPRB development programme in place.

HOW WE MEASURE OUR PERFORMANCE

As a school trust, we are an educational charity. We have a single legal and moral purpose, and that is to advance education for public benefit. Like all organisations, we have a range of performance indicators and measures on which we are judged and how we evaluate ourselves.

We acknowledge that academic outcomes need to be part of how we judge what we have achieved. However, if we are to make the biggest difference, our success will not only be measured in exam results. In all of our schools, we value the wider enrichment experience which educates the whole child. We do this by providing a curriculum that gives our pupils the essential knowledge and cultural capital that they need to succeed in life.

All of our schools are judged by Ofsted and we aim for all of our schools to be graded as good or better in full inspections.





On academic measures alone, for the life of this plan, we focus on the following two key measures:

- Performance in our primary schools being at or above the expected national standards in reading, writing and maths for 11 year olds.
- In our secondary schools, we judge our success on the delivery of academic results that place our schools to be on a trajectory to be placed in the top 10% nationally for pupil progress.

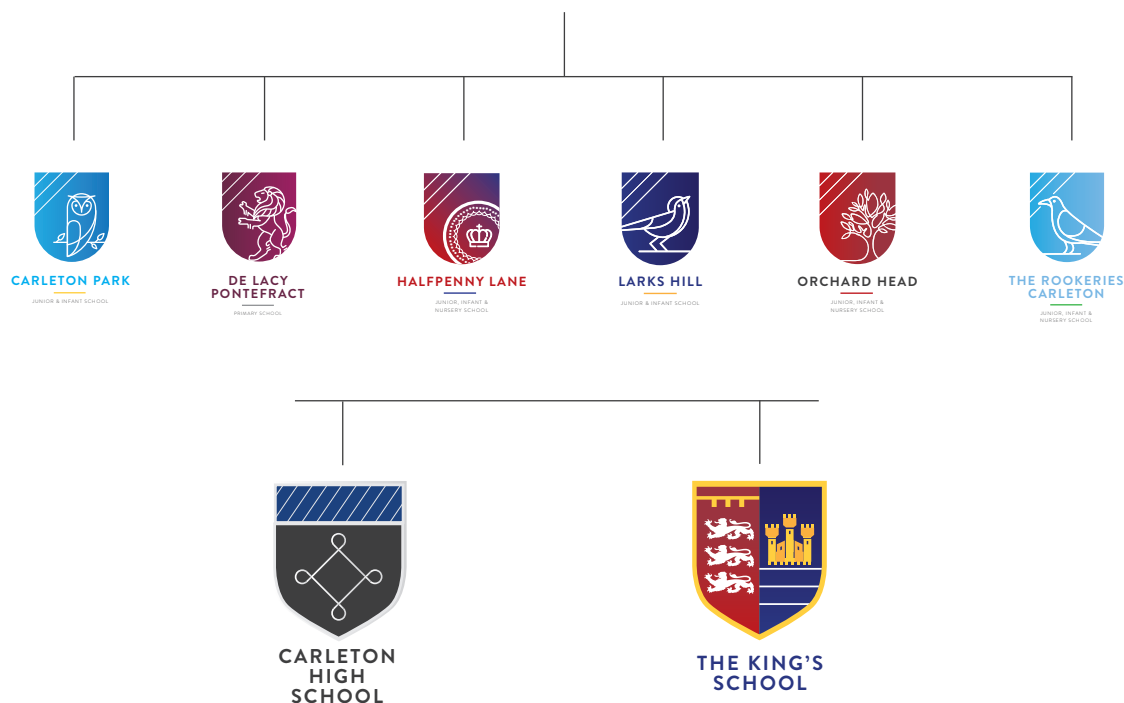
We understand the importance of measuring and evaluating ourselves against the full range of educational key performance indicators. These include:

- Academic attainment
- Pupil progress
- Disadvantaged pupil performance

As well as comparing attendance and behaviour indicators against national benchmarks, this allows us to identify and respond to any areas that we need to improve.



PONTEFRACT
ACADEMIES TRUST



8 SCHOOLS

**ONE
TRUST**