

**School Improvement-Building the next
stage of system led improvement**

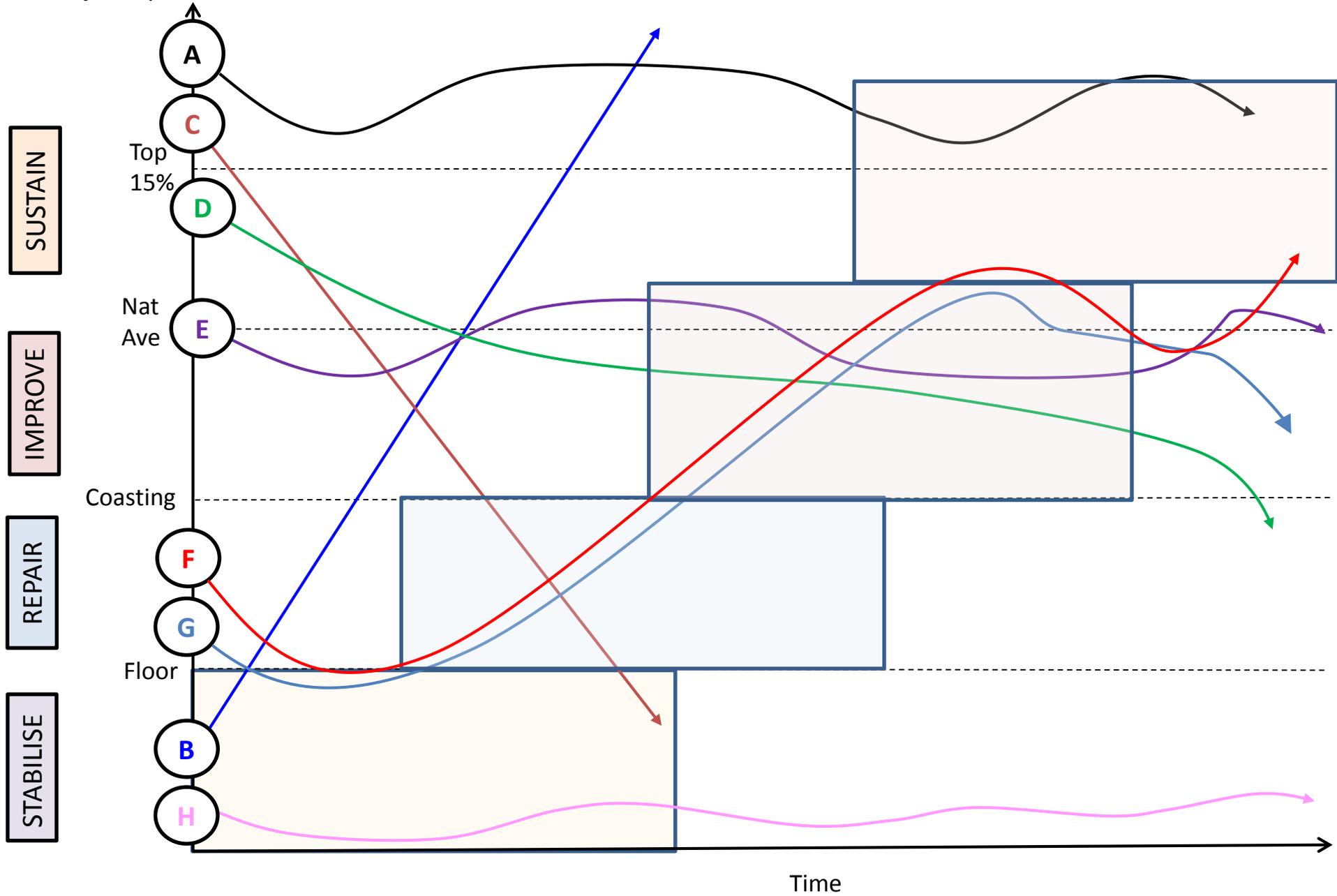
Sir David Carter

National Schools Commissioner

What underpins the way that the school led system delivers improvement?

- Secure Sustainable improvement **TAKES TIME** but leaders need to prioritise and sequence the changes they need to make
- Schools and Trusts need to see themselves as **capacity givers** and **capacity takers** over a period of time
- Schools improve sequentially and in stages
- School Improvement is the product of high quality leadership so understanding the stage of the improvement journey is important for getting the right leaders in place
- School Improvement can be judged through the lens of results and OFSTED inspections **but not exclusively**.
- **STRATEGY+CAPACITY + PACE = Improvement**

Performance Trajectory



SUSTAIN

IMPROVE

REPAIR

STABILISE

Top 15%

Nat Ave

Coasting

Floor

Time

- A** Strongest Performers
- B** Rapid improvers
- C** Rapid Decliners
- D** Slow Decliners
- E** Steady and Secure
- F** Steady Improvers
- G** Improver Decliners
- H** Weakest System Performers

“Secure Sustainable improvement **TAKES TIME** and leaders need to prioritise and sequence the changes they need to make”

- The school can only really improve in line with the time it takes to raise the quality of leadership and teaching
- The four phases will overlap so there is no defined start and end date
- Teams, year groups and departments will progress through the stages at different rates.
 - Maths might be in the **improve** phase at the same time that Science is in **repair** and PE is in **sustain**
 - Big implications in a primary school if EY and Year 6 were to be in need of repair at the same time
- **Seeing cross subject and cross team trajectories as part of the whole enables the strategic focus and resources to be targeted at the right areas**

Who are the “Capacity Givers” in the System?

- **Organisations**

- Successful and Sustainable high performing maintained schools, academies and MATS
- Teaching School Alliances
- Maths Hubs
- NPQ Licensed Providers
- Newly designated Research Schools
- Effective school improvement providers working across Local Authorities
- Credible and Effective Improvement organisations (Teach First, ASL, EEF, Sutton Trust, NSN)
- Universities and HE Schools of Education
- Independent Schools

- **Designated System Leaders**

- National leaders of education
- National leaders of governors
- Specialist leaders of education
- CEO of MATS
- Headteacher Board Members
- DfE Education Advisors
- Academy Ambassadors
- Leaders of School Improvement in TSA, MATS etc
- Outstanding Heads of good schools
- Great school leaders past and present, who are none of the above

What contribution should we expect our “Capacity Givers” to make?

- **Connecting the school to wider system thinking**

- Diagnosis of Improvement Need
- Bring evidence based thinking to strategic development
- Challenge the emerging strategic plan
- Offer Advice and Guidance to Leaders and Governors on managing change
- Mentor and Coach School Leadership teams
- Challenge thinking and practice and review implementation
- Open up access to new networks

- **Bringing the wider system into the school**

- Take over the leadership of a school in severe crisis
- Add capacity at team level and review team performance
- Source classroom and middle leader support
- Build sustainability for long term success
- Identify talent and potential for succession planning
- Deliver bespoke training
- Identify better schools for leaders to visit and learn from

The four stages of Improving a School –The Stabilise Phase

Observable Features from the System

- Unstable leadership & Ineffective governance has recently failed to hold anyone to account
- Limited evidence of any external support having had an impact
- High staff turnover and high staff absence with recruitment of better staff challenging
- Pupil attendance and PA below national floor
- Significant financial risk or mismanagement
- Poor student outcomes at KS2/KS4 – below floor and/or coasting
- T&L is poor, with limited or no CPD for staff
- Student behaviour has been chaotic or unsafe

The four stages of Improving a School-The Repair Phase

Observable Features from the System

- Stable leadership across the school and trust is securing standards
- The support from a strong TSA and/or MAT is starting to repair and improve the school
- Governance is improving & holding the school leadership to account
- Improvement in outcomes is clear in internal assessments even though outcomes from national tests are taking longer to improve
- Pockets of improved performance in key year groups and subjects
- CPD quality is mixed and focus not bespoke to the needs of the school
- Student behaviour is improving but low level disruption is common and remains a barrier to progress

The four stages of Improving a School –The Improve Phase

Observable Features from the System

- Stable leadership across the school and trust is securing sustainable improvement
- The TSA/MAT support and the work of the leaders in the school is shifting as much to assuring quality as on operational delivery
- Governance is strong and consistently holds leadership to account
- Student outcomes are above floor and there is confidence that this can be sustained by younger children in the school
- T&L is strong in most year groups and subject areas with just a few pockets of ineffective practice that are being addressed appropriately
- CPD is addressing the bespoke needs of more teams and individuals
- Behaviour in the school is more positive with limited low level disruption

The four stages of Improving a School –The Sustain Phase

Observable Features from the System

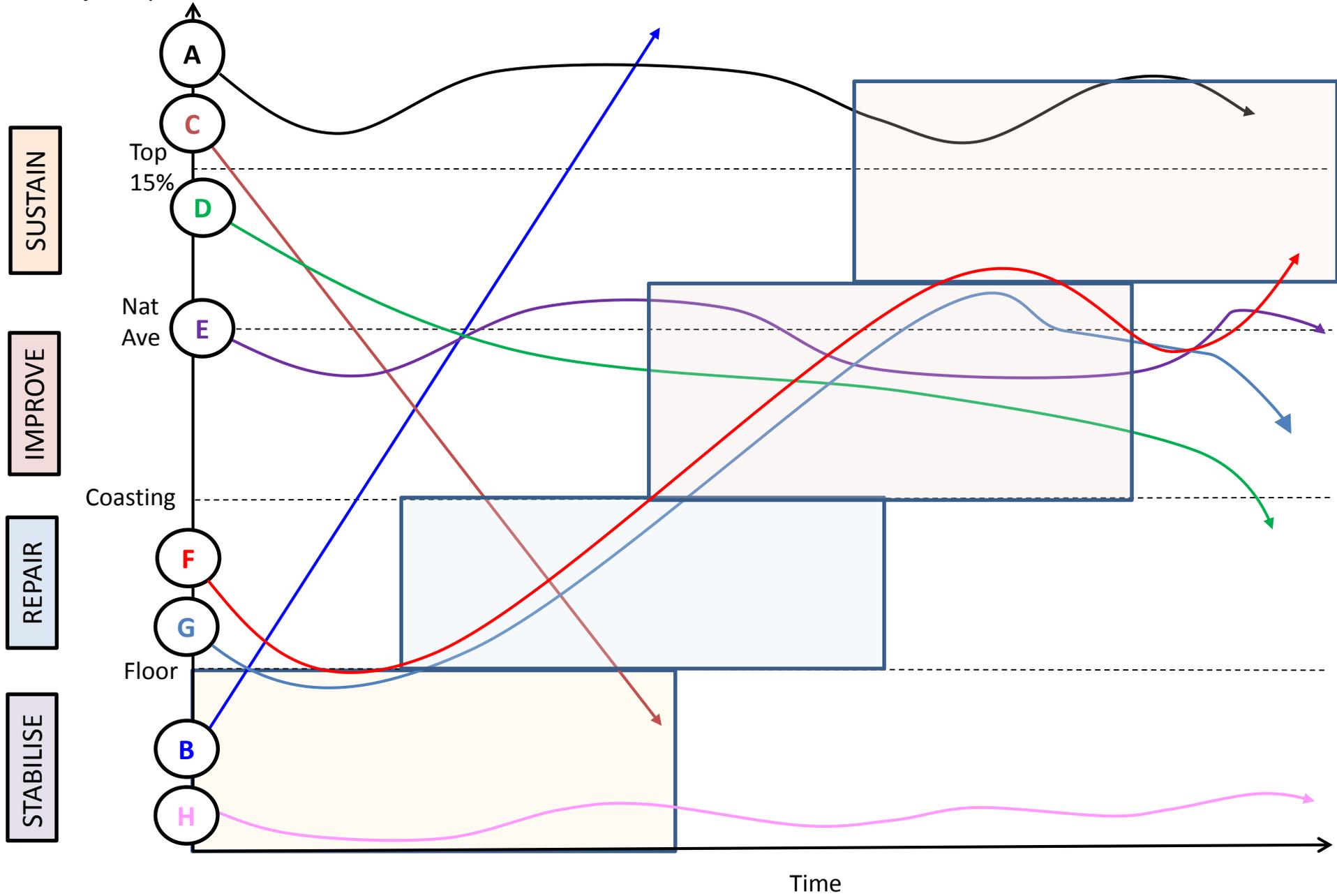
- Effective strategic leadership looking longer term and beginning to provide the wider school system with capacity to support other schools
- Leadership team are developing new areas of expertise that it contributes to wider system CPD and support
- Governance is strong and sustainable for the future
- Outcomes for all learners are good, the school is consistently above floor and no groups of learners significantly underperform
- Embedded and effective CPD is bespoke to need and encourages effective succession planning
- Behaviour of students is positive and low level disruption is rare

The Eight Improvement Trajectories that underpin school improvement

- **Core Principles**

- Every organisation in the education sector is on a continuous improvement journey from the very best to those that need the most support
- Understanding the challenges & opportunities that each trajectory presents is the key to unlocking the right strategies
- There are critical points on every trajectory where decisions taken add to momentum & accelerate improvement OR have the opposite effect if delivered badly
- The need to learn from what is already working in the system
 - Clear and Credible strategies that are replicable

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The Eight Improvement Trajectories that underpin school improvement

- **Journey A Strongest Performers** over time-amongst the best in the system
- **Question**-Do they support the improvement in the system in a proactive way? How do we engage those that do not?
- **These schools can be Capacity Givers**
- System Role to help **PREVENT** failure and **INTERVENE** to accelerate improvement

- **Journey H Weakest Performers** with limited capacity to improve themselves and need the most support
- **Question**-Do we have the right strategies in place for these schools?
- These schools need to take Capacity from the system to accelerate improvement

The Eight Improvement Trajectories that underpin school improvement

- **Journey B-Rapid Improvers** who improve quickly as a result of extra capacity from wider system partners
- **Question**-How replicable is this when significant capacity is not available?
- **These schools can be Capacity Givers as they improve quickly and can utilise the organisational memory of improvement as it remains fresh**
- System Role to **support** other schools that have potential to rapidly improve

- **Journey C-Rapid Decliners** who decline quickly as response to changing accountability expectations has been too slow
- **Question**-Can we prevent this failure by anticipating the challenge before the school fails?
Capacity Takers
- These schools need to be open to taking Capacity from the system but may believe they can do it themselves

The Eight Improvement Trajectories that underpin school improvement

- **Journey D-Slow Decliners** where a lack of momentum has convinced leaders that all is well
 - **Question**-How does prevention work here? How do we convince leaders and governors to focus on improvement?
 - **These schools are capacity takers but may not be aware of how much help they really need**
 - For these schools membership of a strong school to school partnership (TSA or MAT) is vital
- **Journey E-Steady and Secure performer** but potential to be an outstanding school is not being developed
 - **Question**-Can we “nudge” schools like this to take action quicker?
 - **These schools should be Capacity Givers and would improve their own performance by working collaboratively**

The Eight Improvement Trajectories that underpin school improvement

- **Journey F-Steady Improvers** who improve strategically and sequentially over time
- **Question**-How do we become more assertive with the system to describe the sequence of change management that led to the improvement?
- These schools have capacity to give to the system as the sequential nature of the improvement can apply to different trajectories

- **Journey G-Improver/Decliners** improve well over time but lack the final momentum shift to become a top performer
- **Question**-Can we anticipate those schools that are on a positive upward trajectory but look like they may stall?
- These schools are potentially Capacity Givers because supporting another school could be injection of momentum needed to make the difference.

How might we best deploy the Schematic as a performance improvement tool?

- Developed by the NSC with the RSCs, CEOs, Principals of MATS, leaders of TSA, & colleagues in across the DfE
- The Intention is to use this in some of the following ways
 - As a point of discussion for leaders across the education system
 - As a self assessment tool to help diagnose how schools are performing across the system and teams within the schools
 - As a self assessment tool for MATS boards and TSA to determine how best to support their schools that are on different journeys
 - As a strategic focus to contribute to future policy thinking as to the best way to improve out education system
 - To consider the relationship between capacity givers and capacity taker and when a school moves from one to the other

**The Strategic Decisions that MATS take
that impacts on Improvement and the
Collaborative Culture**

Understanding the Autonomy, Alignment and Standardised Structure

- **What are the key factors underpinning this thinking?**
 - The better MAT performers are closer to standardisation than complete school autonomy
 - A diverse MAT system is highly desirable so we should not attempt to impose a single model that MATS need to adopt
 - As the MAT model matures, more trusts are recognising the need to align strategy and delivery across the schools in a more significant way and move from being loose to tighter
 - Size does make a difference to the position a MAT might take on this spectrum

What do we mean by Autonomy, Alignment and Standardised models?

- **Being Autonomous means enabling the Academies to choose what they do on the basis of local need**
- **What does Standardisation mean?**
 - *“The process of making something conform to a standard”*
- The way we do things is the same across the whole MAT

- **What does being Aligned mean?**
 - *“Strategic partnerships require alignment with organisational mission and vision”*
- The way we do things has some common elements but some scope for flexibility

What are the benefits of greater Standardisation across the MAT?

- Greater equality of experience for Children
- Effective practice across the MAT is evidence led
- Leads to economies of scale in terms of time, resource and speed of school improvement
- Enables staff to work within clearly defined parameters that are common to teams across the trust
- Enables leaders, teachers, governors, parents and children to be clear about the expectations of the individual in the trust structure

- **It can be challenging because....**
 - Schools may have been promised their autonomy
 - Schools often think that their challenges are unique
 - Schools are reluctant to let their strongest staff play a wider role across the MAT
 - Schools can be afraid of their weaknesses and strengths being shared more visibly

How Alignment across a MAT is a positive step towards greater Standardisation

- For MATS moving towards a more standardised model of educational delivery, agreeing on alignment & the potential for co-construction around core goals is a vital mid-way point between school autonomy and standardisation
- Alignment can be built around these 5 focus areas
 - The experience of the child
 - The experience of the family or carers
 - The experience of the member of staff
 - The experience of other schools in the same MAT
 - The experience of the wider schools community through better MAT partnerships with other schools outside the trust

Implementing the Autonomy-Alignment-Standardisation Tool

- **Key questions to focus on to determine how the MAT Strategy evolves**
- **Strategic Focus Areas**
 1. Governance and Setting Vision
 2. Being a single employer
 3. Financial Management
 4. Raising Standards and Improvement Planning

<p>Which features of the MAT strategy are <u>STANDARDISED</u> across all Academies?</p>	<p>How an Academy <u>ALIGNS</u> and <u>Co-Constructs</u> its strategies and approaches</p>	<p>Where does an Academy still have the <u>AUTONOMY/OWNERSHIP</u> to take decisions?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Governance & Setting Vision and Direction</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Articulating the values and beliefs of the trust 2. Setting the destination points 3. Indicators of success (KPI) 4. Building a growth strategy 5. Board Governance 6. Local Academy Boards and the scheme of delegation 7. Monitoring MAT & Academy Risk 8. Governor Training across MAT 9. Ensuring that staff and children are safe 10. Crisis management procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Governance and Setting Vision and Direction</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstrating the value and beliefs of the trust in day to day and strategic operations 2. Delivering the targets and KPI negotiated with the board 3. Working with the MAT board so that they know how well the academy is performing and what help it needs 4. Understanding the implications of growth for the academy as a result of excellent MAT communications 5. Managing the Academy Risk Register to enable the MAT Board to take responsibility 6. Ensuring that governors at Academy Board level access training and attend 7. Ensuring children are safe on their site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Governance and Setting Vision</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agreeing targets that are challenging and appropriate to the context of the academy 2. Delivering results that contribute to the MAT performance goals 3. Recruiting strong governors to the academy board 4. Offering expertise to support governor training and development 5. Collaborating with other Academy boards 6. Being willing to support children “at risk” in other academies as an alternative to exclusion

<p>Which features of the MAT strategy are <u>STANDARDISED</u> across all Academies?</p>	<p>How an Academy <u>ALIGNS</u> its strategies and approaches in a more Standardised Culture</p>	<p>Where does an Academy still have the <u>AUTONOMY/OWNERSHIP</u> to take decisions?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Being a single employer</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Key central Policies 2. Recruitment & Retention 3. Compliance with HR, Finance and IT systems and processes 4. Payroll-making sure everyone is paid on time and correctly 5. Determining the best model of staff deployment across the MAT 6. Performance Management • <u>Financial Management</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Curriculum led financial planning 2. Budget setting & Reporting 3. Surplus target setting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Where the MAT is the single employer not the school</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensuring that staff in the academy are recruited & retained in line with MAT policy 2. By agreeing to release talented staff to work across the MAT 3. By expecting academy staff to work in the same way as other colleagues in similar jobs in other academies 4. By implementing the performance management structure to the highest possible standards of consistency • <u>Financial Management</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. By agreeing the academy budget and meeting targets for savings and surplus 2. By adhering to the parameters of the curriculum led financial model for the academy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Where the MAT is the single employer not the school</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensuring that MAT policies are well explained to academy staff 2. How posts in the academy are described to potential applicants 3. The design of the recruitment process & the tasks candidates complete 4. The expectation of support that the academy will get when staff work MAT wide 5. By structuring academy and MAT specific performance objectives 6. Expecting Academy senior leaders to have MAT wide objectives • <u>Financial Management</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Spending priorities within agreed budget cost-centres 2. How any surpluses can be spent to benefit the academy

<p>Which features of the MAT strategy are <u>STANDARDISED</u> across all Academies?</p>	<p>How an Academy <u>ALIGNS</u> its strategies and approaches in a more Standardised Culture</p>	<p>Where does an Academy still have the <u>AUTONOMY/OWNERSHIP</u> to take decisions?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Raising Standards & Improvement Planning</u> • Target Setting and Monitoring <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Setting targets for performance at Trust and Academy level 2. Trust and Academy SEF structures 3. Common Data systems through a single MIS 4. Data Collection points and the analysis of KPI 5. How frequently parents are informed about their child's progress 6. Leadership Accountability Structure (Team Meetings, one to one meetings, scrutiny of performance etc) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Raising Standards & Improvement Planning</u> • Target Setting and Monitoring <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Academy agrees in principle with the setting of ambitious targets 2. Academy leaders support other schools to deliver targets in return for their support 3. Academy is not precious about who owns their data and how and when it is presented-Their children are MAT children 4. Academy Board and senior leaders accept then challenge and support offered by the MAT Executive team 5. Academy agrees that more frequent reporting to parents is a core principle of better engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Raising Standards & Improvement Planning</u> • Target Setting and Monitoring <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Setting sub targets for oversight that are important to the academy but not to the MAT 2. How data is used internally to raise standards 3. When the parent consultation evenings are placed in the calendar 4. How a report is presented and when it is published 5. Leadership structures and some element of role responsibilities are aligned across the Academy to reflect MAT priorities and cost expectations

<p>Which features of the MAT strategy are <u>STANDARDISED</u> across all Academies?</p>	<p>Where does the MAT <u>ALIGN</u> its strategies & approaches across the Academies?</p>	<p>Where does an Academy still have the <u>AUTONOMY/OWNERSHIP</u> to take decisions?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Raising Standards & Improvement Planning</u> • School to School Support across the MAT <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The MAT identifies the support that academies need and secures it 2. The MAT appoints quality subject leaders to work across academies and oversee standards 3. The MAT plans development opportunities for training & development • Curriculum Delivery <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. MAT wide testing, mocks exams and trust wider moderation 2. Common Exam Boards for GCSE and A Level 3. Core approaches to teaching Maths, Phonics, MFL, and other subjects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Raising Standards & Improvement Planning</u> • School to School Support across the MAT <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Academy offers capacity to support other schools and access help when needed 2. Academy proactively makes sure that staff access MAT CPD and development opportunities 3. Academy Middle Leaders understand that they may not take all the decisions relating to their subject delivery 4. Academy offers training for MAT staff to attend alongside their own staff • Curriculum Delivery <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The MAT internal testing system is accepted as the operating model by the academy 2. The Academy agrees to change exam boards to achieve MAT consistency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Raising Standards & Improvement Planning</u> • School to School Support <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Academy still works with other Improvement partners where outcomes are supported 2. Behaviour systems are academy centric against MAT ethos 3. Subject intervention with key students is school led • Curriculum Delivery <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enrichment and extended learning is still organized by the Academy for their students 2. Academy selects exam boards for non core subjects 3. Subject staff in the academy moderate the work of students in other schools