



**Minerva**  
Learning Trust

# **Our Year**

**Annual Report for 2019-20**

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# 1. Introduction

We have much to be proud of for the 2019-20 academic year. Our organisation successfully navigated our way through one of the most difficult challenges ever to face our sector - a worldwide pandemic. Despite this additional challenge, our organisation continued to grow, continued to improve and our Centre Assessment Grades provided our students with the grades required to continue on the next stage of their journey. We continue to improve our schools so that they all provide the best educational experience possible and our financial position is stronger than ever.

The 2019-2020 academic year taught us much about what works well and where we can do better, but our biggest lesson learned is also the most important: more than ever, our focus continues to be priorities that matter the most – providing the very best for our students by supporting and developing our talented and dedicated staff.

This document details some of the key successes, outcomes and lessons learned from the 2019-2020 academic year. There is much to celebrate and lots to be proud of.

Thank you to all staff, students, Member, Trustees, Governors, Parents/Carers and other stakeholders who have supported our organisation to grow and develop over the last twelve months.

Bev Matthews  
CEO

# 2. Our Organisation

## 2.1 Culture

### Who we are

Minerva Learning Trust is a legal entity registered as an exempt Charity and established in October 2014. Our vision is to provide outstanding education for pupils who are from a wide variety of backgrounds across the city of Sheffield. During 2017-18 the Trust brought together four secondary schools to create a new partnership which will support the teaching and learning of around 5,000 pupils. In September 2020, we will be joined by Chapelton Academy which will enhance post-16 provision within the Trust in the north of the city. We resolutely believe that we are stronger together and that each school within the MAT has individual strengths and we celebrate the diverse and unique qualities of each particular school.

### What we do

Our aim is to deliver an outstanding education for all students, staff and stakeholders.

We do this through an ethos of collegiality which wholeheartedly places pupils at the centre. Inclusion is at the heart of all we do as a Trust. Our pupils show a high level of care for each other and respect each other's diversity. We do not allow disadvantage to be a barrier to learning and we support all of our pupils to be the very best.

### Why we exist

Our mission, vision and values are central to our work and are the driving force behind all that we do. Our vision of Outstanding Together, Working Together and Learning Together is underpinned by our core values of Inclusion, Independence, Respect and Success:

# Our Mission, Vision and Values



## OUR MISSION

To provide an outstanding education for pupils, staff and stakeholders within the Trust.

## OUR VISION

Our mission is underpinned by our vision that we are 'Stronger Together' by:

### 'Working Together'

Our students, staff and stakeholders work in partnership to maximise attainment and achievement and create successful and confident citizens.

### 'Learning Together'

Our students, staff and stakeholders learn collaboratively with each other to develop a highly skilled workforce which impacts positively on students' life chances.

### 'Outstanding Together'

Our leaders, staff and stakeholders work tirelessly to deliver an outstanding quality of education for all students, in all of our schools.

## OUR VALUES

Our values underpin all of the work that we do and all of the decisions that we make.

### Inclusion

We place the needs of our students at the heart of everything we do and we all support and encourage each other.

### Independence

We promote and support strong leadership within our students, staff and stakeholders and we are all accountable for each other.

### Respect

We recognise and appreciate the diverse qualities of our schools, workforce and stakeholders and we all care for each other.

### Success

We celebrate and communicate our successes, share good practice and we all promote a culture of continuously learning from each other.

## OUR BELIEFS

- We believe that we will have a significant impact on young people in Sheffield by providing outstanding provision.
- We believe that we can empower existing and aspiring leaders to drive school improvement.
- We believe that through a quality education, we can support pupils to be successful in life after school and to positively contribute to society.
- We believe that a child's background and circumstances should not pre-determine their future.
- We believe that we can enrich the learning experience for all our pupils by providing aspirational opportunities beyond the classroom.

## 2.2 Growth

# 1

new school transferred in for 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020



## 2.3 Governance

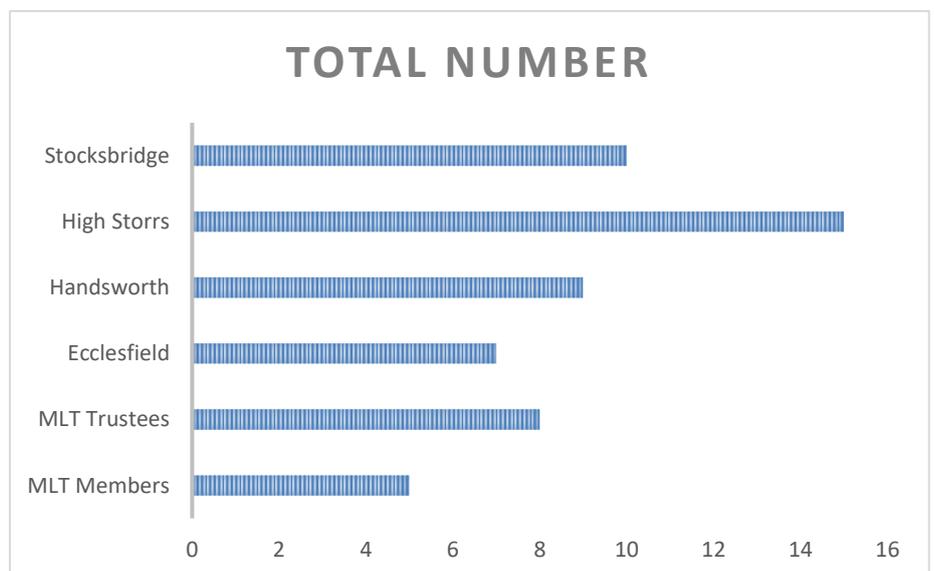
# 47

Trustees and Governors



60% Male 40% Female

## TOTAL NUMBER



## 2.4 Successes

Our new Chief Executive took up post in November 2019 to work with the existing Executive Leadership Team lead the Trust on the next stage of its development. The Central Team also grew in size following the centralisation of finance and human resource functions and creation of a School Improvement Team.

Much work was undertaken to embed the culture of one organisation and to increase stakeholder understanding of who we are, what we do and why we exist. Many opportunities have been taken to collaborate within and between schools to improve the quality of education and the efficiency of services through creation of a range of network meetings across teaching and support staff. Staff are now more aware of the aims of the organisation and what they can do to contribute towards them. 'The big culture conversation' was launched in 2019 with staff across the Trust. Feedback has shown that our people are increasingly looking beyond the four walls of their own schools to pursue meaningful opportunities to collaborate within the Trust and further afield. By evolving our culture in this way, we are finding new ways to provide a better standard of education to our pupils.

The impact of more frequent and better quality reporting systems to facilitate enhanced sharing and scrutiny of evidence by Member, Trustees, Governors, Executive teams and school leaders has helped create focused collaboration to secure more rapid school improvement and has ensured a heightened transparency of data across all areas of our work.

Improving the quality of leadership and the provision of professional development opportunities for leaders at all levels and in all areas of our business. Roll out of our new leadership development programmes have been a success, seeing record numbers of participants recording a 98% satisfaction rating. Face to face and remote CPD, alongside mentoring and coaching have enhanced the knowledge and expertise of our leaders, and teachers, as part of our ongoing mission to ensure all areas of our business are outstanding.

The response to the Coronavirus pandemic was a major focus of the summer term. Much work was undertaken by the Central team to provide guidance and support for schools throughout the pandemic and in readiness for the return of students in September. Trustees played a key role throughout in order to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all stakeholders and adherence to statutory and regulatory obligations. New protocols for Governance were rolled out to ensure Governance continued during Lockdown. Improvements in the quality, frequency and transparency of information shared with Trustees and Governors has supported them to carry out their role more effectively.

Our appointments included the Headteacher at Stocksbridge High School and numerous members of Senior Leadership Teams across all four schools. It is pleasing that most of the senior and middle leader appointments are people who have been promoted from within the Trust.

We are pleased that Chapeltown Academy transferred into the Trust on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020 and that we were able to bring them on board despite the difficulties posed by the pandemic. The addition of Chapeltown Academy will add much needed capacity and skills to our team and will provide the opportunity for our Trust to develop a high quality Engineering specialised Post 16 Centre in the North of Sheffield.

Relationships with external agencies are strong and continues to grow. The DfE and ESFA are confident in the quality of education provided for our students and financial stability of the Trust. The Trust is now a going concern with much capacity and potential to grow further.

## 2.5 Challenges

As we continue to develop our culture by listening to the ideas and opinions of our people across five academies and the Central Team. As we embed new ways of working and uphold our core values, part of our challenge is to ensure that sharing our lessons learned and the excellent practice already in place across our Trust happens instinctively by all of our staff and stakeholders, and then develop this practice so

that students, parents/carers and external partners are also aware of what we do and why we do it. This will be especially difficult to do as a result of the pandemic due to the possibility of local lockdowns and school closures.

New ways of leading, working and teaching as a result of the pandemic pose many challenges, both educationally and operationally as we head into the new academic year. The threat of further local and national lock downs poses significant threats to learning and business continuity which plans must be out in place to mitigate against.

The quality of governance and consistency in governance structures and functions will remain a key focus in order to ensure quality of provision and efficiency and effectiveness of operations continues to improve.

## **2.6 Priorities**

We will continue to evolve our culture by strengthening our commitment to every person within our organisation by regularly speaking to our students, their parents and our staff to further understand their views through the big culture conversation and through school visits by the Executive Leadership Team.

We will continue to develop new practices and ways of working and to further develop our ICT infrastructure in order to respond the pandemic, to ensure any gaps in learning are closed and to secure the best outcomes possible for students on the 2021 summer exam series.

Governance processes, structures and functions will continue to develop, supported by a package of high quality training and support in order to ensure effective challenge and support for senior teams across our organisation. Our enhanced strategy for quality assurance of policy, application and impact will be developed so that our governance work is increasingly embedding the monitoring of all compliance and policy frameworks.

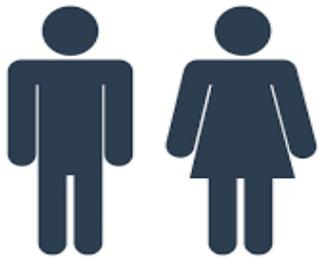
Further growth of the Trust is an essential part of our future success, sustainability and economies of scale. As such, a key emphasis will be placed upon working with the DfE to look at potential growth into the primary sector, transferring of other Trusts into our family and secondary schools outside of Sheffield.

## 3. Our Students

### 3.1 Demographics

# 5,208

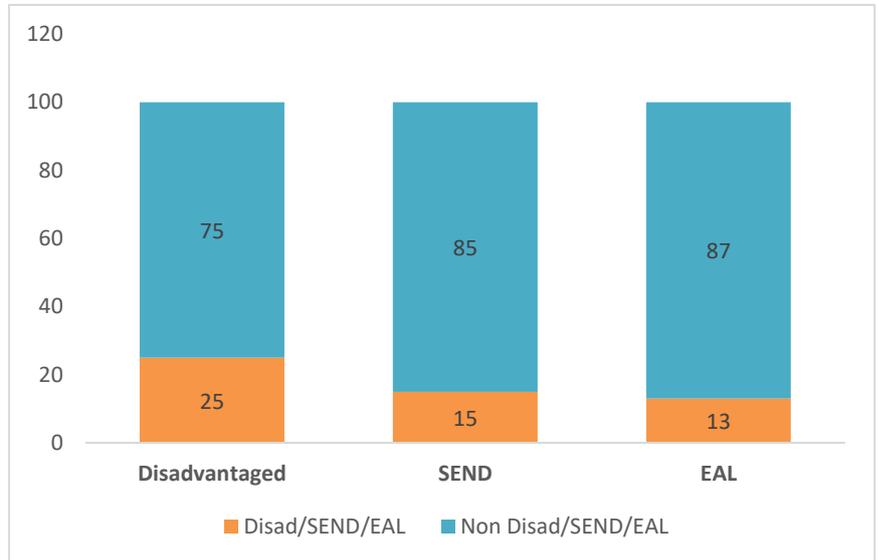
students across 4 secondary schools



4,751  
Year 7-11

457  
Post-16

53% Male 47% Female



### 3.2 GCSE Outcomes

(Please note these were Centre Assessed Grades or Calculated Grades as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic)

# 0.42

average P8  
Above National average  
+0.29 better than last year

# 70/49%

4/5+ in English & Maths  
Above National average  
4/2% better than last year

# 0.12

PP progress 8  
Above National average  
0.32 better than last year

Summary Data			
Year 11 Performance Measures	National 2018	School 18/19	GCSE
Progress 8	-0.03	0.13	↑ 0.42
Attainment 8	46.69	48.58	↑ 50.25
English & Maths 4+	65%	66%	↑ 70%
English & Maths 5+	43%	45%	↑ 49%
EBacc 4+	25%	33%	↑ 37%
EBacc 5+	17%	22%	↑ 24%
EBacc APS	4.07	4.28	↑ 4.46

Pupil Premium			
Year 11 Performance Measures	National 2018	School 18/19	GCSE
Progress 8	-0.45	-0.20	↑ 0.12
Attainment 8	36.68	38.09	↑ 40.61
English & Maths 4+	45%	41%	↑ 50%
English & Maths 5+	25%	26%	↓ 25%
EBacc 4+	13%	15%	↑ 20%
EBacc 5+	7%	9%	↑ 10%
EBacc APS	3.08	3.12	↑ 3.42

### 3.3 A Level Outcomes

(Please note these were Centre Assessed Grades or Calculated Grades as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic)

# 0.4

average VA  
Above National average  
+0.x better than last year

# 67%

A\* - B  
Above National average  
9.1% better than last year

Headline Figures	
Number of Students	216
% A*-E	98%
Number of A* Grades	89
Number of A*-A	270
% A* - B Grades	67%
% A* - C Grades	91%
% of students who gained at least AAB in 2 facilitating subjects	22.2%
Average Grade	B+

Cohort Performance				
	A*-B	Difference	A*-C	Difference
Male	74.0%	16.3%	96.7%	13.1%
Female	57.7%		83.5%	
Bursary	27.9%	-42.9%	80.3%	-11.5%
Non-Bursary	70.8%		91.8%	
SEND	63.8%	-3.1%	95.7%	5.4%
Non-SEND	66.9%		90.4%	
EAL	46.5%	-21.6%	86.1%	-5.0%
Non-EAL	68.2%		91.1%	

### 3.4 Attendance

# 95.1%

Average attendance  
Above National average in all schools

# 10.2%

Average persistent absence  
Below National average

	Overall Attendance	National 2018/19	Persistent Absence	National 2018/19
All	95.1%	94.5%	10.2%	13.7%
Year 7	96.1%	95.6%	7.5%	9.5%
Year 8	95.4%	94.8%	9.1%	12.5%
Year 9	95.1%	94.2%	10.3%	14.7%
Year 10	94.2%	93.8%	12.8%	15.9%
Year 11	94.6%	93.8%	11.7%	15.7%
PP	91.9%	90.8%	21.0%	28.5%
SEND	88.9%	91.6%	23.8%	23.4

### 3.5 Behaviour & Safety

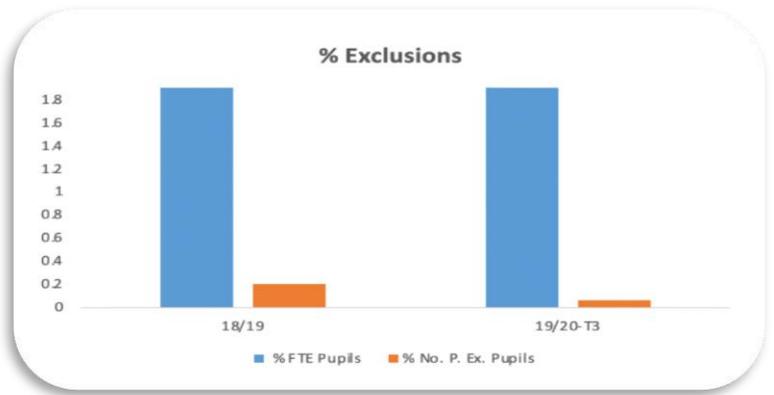
# 7

Permanent Exclusions  
-1 compared to 2018-19

Academic Year	18/19	19/20-T3
% FTE Pupils	6.10	2.84
% No. P. Ex. Pupils	0.20	0.06

# 0.5%

NEETs - below National average  
-0.02% compared to 17-18



## 3.6 Successes

Minerva Learning Trust remains the largest Multi Academy Trust in Sheffield, despite having only four secondary schools and one Post 16 College.

Due to the Coronavirus, results for both A Level and GCSE were generated from Centre Assessment Grades and Calculated Grades. Despite this educational performance across the Trust, and from all four schools, was strong. Preliminary data, using 2019 Attainment 8 coefficients, indicates that progress in all schools and across the Trust was strong, with a Trust wide P8 of 0.42, and that attainment in all schools was par national or better. The disadvantaged gap has closed, with a Trust wide P8 of 0.12, but there is still much work to; especially in light of lost learning as a result of the pandemic. Science is a particular success story, with all schools now demonstrating strong attainment and/or progress in all courses

Introduction and implementation of the Trust's School Improvement Framework and School Improvement Strategy, which saw the successful implementation of our Peer Review process and Quality Assurance visits, have allowed more timely and effective support and challenge and have ensure greater collaboration between schools to improve areas for development and to share best practice. Leaders and staff at all levels of the organisation have been involved in providing this support, which in turn has provided invaluable professional development opportunity for them and allowed the transfer of best practice between schools. This work will be supported further through expansion of the Central School Improvement Team, which will add much needed capacity and support to schools throughout the next academic year.

An acute focus has been placed upon the quality of the curriculum in all schools. All schools have reviewed curriculum provision to ensure it is well planned, well sequenced and meets the needs of all learners. Our Trust School Improvement Partner has played a key role in providing support and challenge for leaders and teachers and in quality assuring our school's curriculum plans. Much work has been undertaken to secure the readiness of governors, leaders and staff for implementation of the new Ofsted framework and the heightened focus upon the curriculum. An external review has also been undertaken, using Integrated Curriculum Financial planning principles, in all schools to ensure the curriculum is fit for purpose and is value for money. Curriculum plans have been reviewed in light of its findings and the average curriculum bonus across our Trust is now 0.75, which is indicates that our curriculum and staffing models are financially efficient.

The work of the new Trust Educational Welfare Officer has made a striking impact, attendance and persistence absence in all schools now par national or better. The addition of new robust, clear and consistently implemented guidance and procedures have contributed towards this success. This has been supported by a decrease on permanent exclusions and fixed term exclusions across the Trust. Elective Home Education is rare and is supported by a robust process to facilitate the students staying in schools. Safeguarding remains a strength of the Trust and we are proud of our inclusive ethos, which is evident in all of our schools.

### **3.7 Challenges**

The progress and attainment gap for our disadvantaged and SEND students is still too wide. Given the impact of the pandemic, it is predicted that this gap will have widened further across all year groups. A gap we will find hard to close across all of our schools. A key concern is the social and emotional impact of the pandemic on our children and families. Plans are in place to provide additional support for this upon their return.

Gaps also still remain in attendance and exclusions for our disadvantaged and SEND students. The Trust's attendance strategy will work with schools to develop approaches to close this gap quickly. The Educational Welfare Officer will also provide support to help improve attendance at Key Stage 4, as most schools show a decline in attendance over time.

Although all schools are ready for Ofsted, a visit during a pandemic poses many challenges, which we will work with our leaders and staff to help foresee and overcome.

### **3.8 Priorities**

We will focus on improving standards in every school by enabling teachers and leaders across the Trust to work more collaboratively, specifically on our curriculum strategy and our response to the Coronavirus pandemic. Successful implementation of our Trust Digital Strategy will be a key contributing factor to the success of this, by ensuring our schools have plans in place to continue curriculum delivery during potential lockdown and student isolations. Providing additional pastoral and safeguarding provision for students and families who require support as a result of the pandemic will also be a key priority.

We continue to prioritise people development, well-being, communication and retention, and we will continue to work closely with school leaders to ensure this continues to be a key focus despite the pandemic.

Our Trust Senior Director of Inclusion and Director of Vulnerable Groups will make disadvantaged and SEND students a priority in order to close the gap through provision of a robust recovery curriculum and a keen focus upon strategies that will improve attendance and reduce exclusions of these key groups.

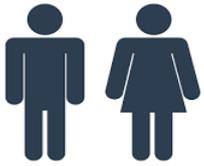
## 4. Our People

### 4.1 Staffing

1 teacher for every 17 students

0.75

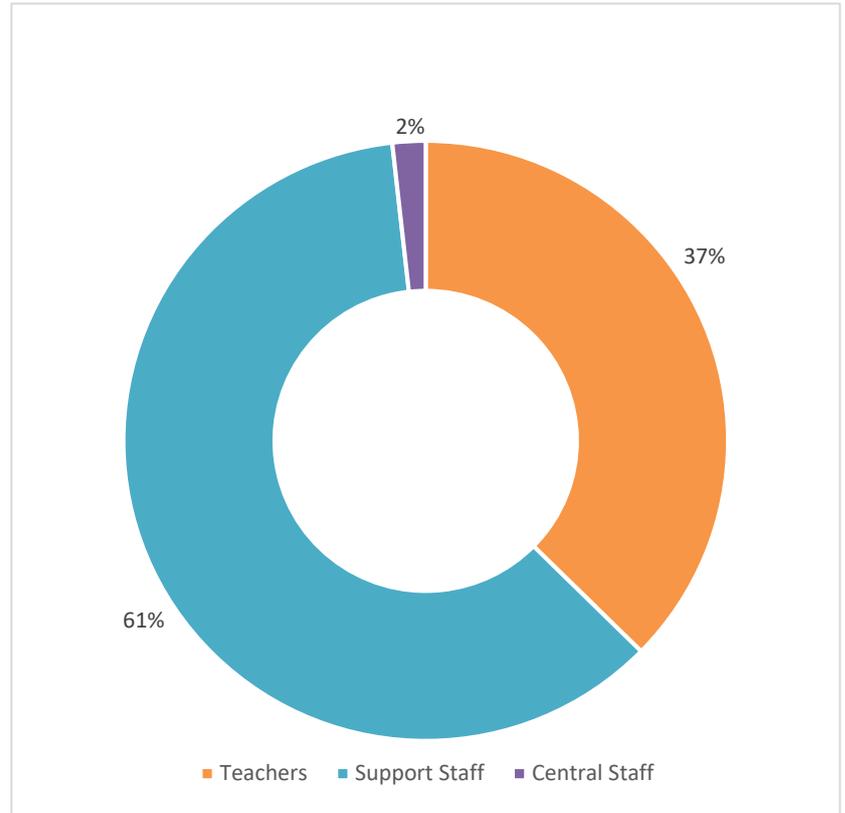
average Curriculum Bonus (contact time)



31% Male 69% Female

10.9%

Gender Pay Gap - women's mean hourly rate is less than men's



### 4.2 Leadership

8.6%

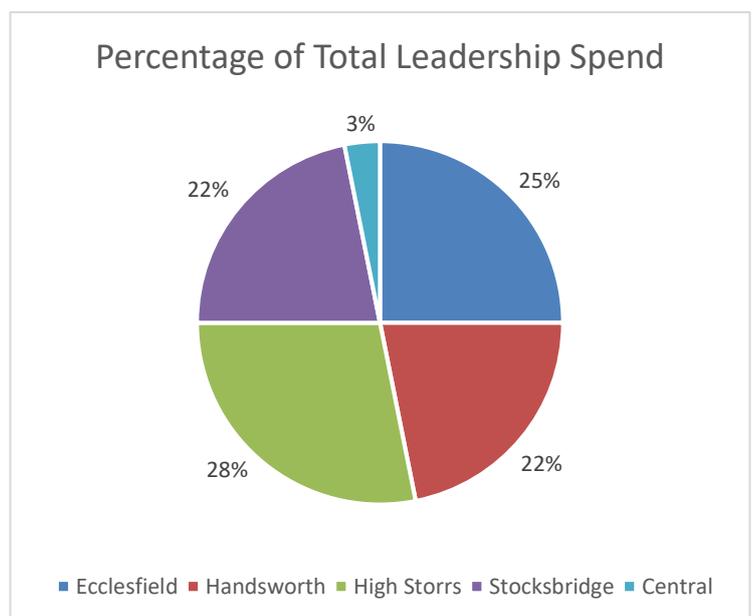
budget spent on leadership teams

7.8

average number on Leadership Team per school



38% Male 62% Female



### 4.3 Professional Development

5

'ROUTES' offered

15

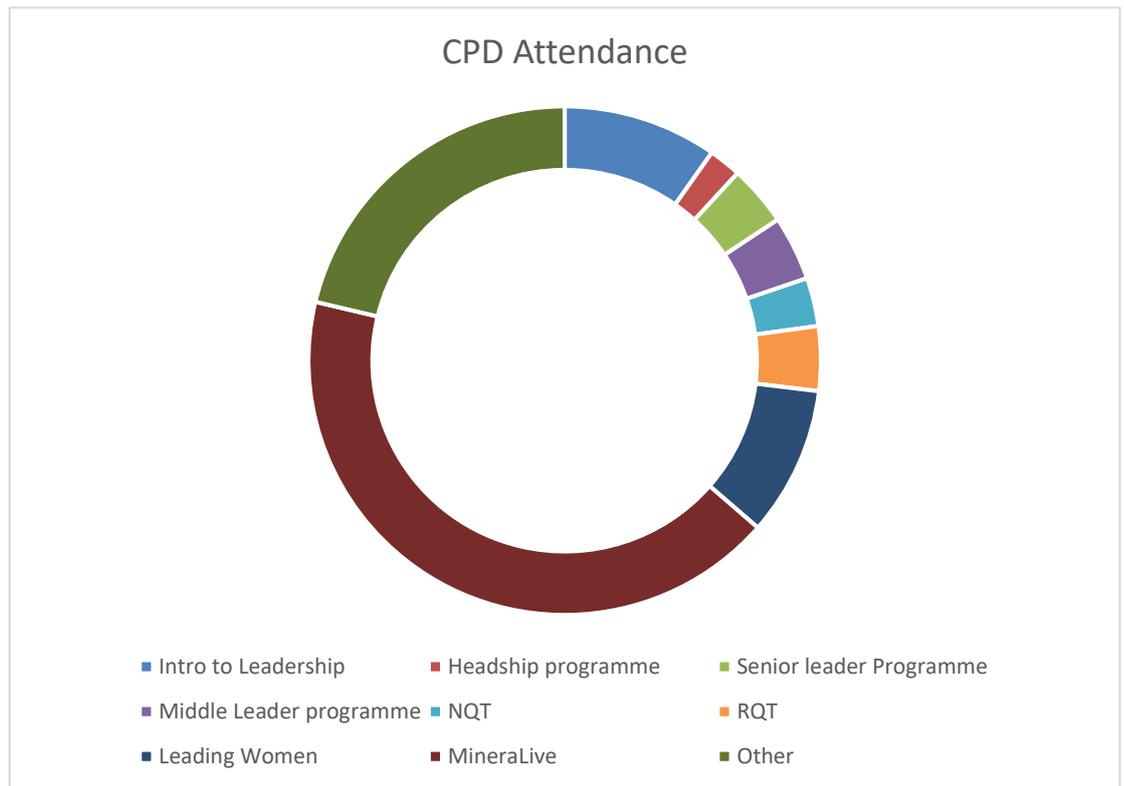
courses delivered

142

participants in total

10

colleagues accessed external leadership courses



### 4.4 Successes

Our Trust professional development offer has gone from strength to strength. Our CPD offer has been expanded and our new ROUTES programmes and Career Development Pathways have been well received. Courses have been well attended and levels of staff satisfaction are high. New innovations, such as 'MinervaLive', have allowed the creation of a more flexible CPD offer that better meets staff needs by providing greater flexibility and choice as to how and when staff can access CPD. Support session focused upon the use of TEAMS and remote teaching practices have been well received and attended. These innovations will continue to grow and develop into the future.

Staffing has remained stable throughout this academic year and retention rates have remained high. A Trust wide curriculum review ensured our curriculum models are now fit for purpose and value for money. This has also been a significant factor in ensuring the long-term stability of the Trust's financial position.

Human resources advice, guidance, policies and procedures have been strengthened. Additional staffing capacity within the Central Team has provided provide additional capacity and expertise in order to further improve our human resources provision to schools. Centralisation of human resources and introduction of robust Standard Operating Procedures has improved consistency and quality of human resources across our schools. It has also reduced the risk to the Trust and increased its ability to meet its statutory and regulatory obligations.

### 4.5 Challenges

The return of staff following the full reopening of schools in September remains a key challenge and focus to ensure staff return safely and confidently. Maintaining staff health, safety and wellbeing will be a top priority. Realigning staff to new ways of working will also pose difficulties. Support and professional

development will be provided within schools and across the Trust to support staff as quickly and effectively as possible.

High levels of staff absence is also a possibility. Working with schools to remain open and to maintain staff morale and wellbeing throughout this will be of paramount importance.

Ensuring high quality continuous professional development, which provides staff with the skills they need to manage remote teaching and working, will be a challenge. A flexible CPD programme has been developed for this academic year which builds upon our learning from lockdown and encompasses a range of delivery methods to meet all staff needs and eventualities.

## 4.6 Priorities

Continuing delivery of our professional development programmes will be key to ensuring our staff are well trained in flexible approaches to teaching and working. These will continue to utilise the skills and expertise of our internal staff and will provide opportunities for our staff to share good practice and collaborate even further. Our 'ROUTES' programmes and clearly mapped Career Development Pathways will support all staff to further develop their practice, work towards their career goals and help contribute to our ethos of 'growing our own'.

We are proud to be one of first participants of the National Early Career Development programme, in partnership with the Ambition Institute. This will provide our new teachers with high quality early career professional development opportunities from which they can utilise research to improve their practice and positively impact upon the life chances of our young people.

Further refining our PMR policy and process towards a system that focuses upon professional development and career development goals will contribute towards our goal of facilitating all staff to continuously reflect and develop so that all staff can contribute towards the success of our organisation.

Developing systems to monitor and ensure staff wellbeing throughout the next academic year and beyond will be of paramount importance in order to successfully navigate our way through the pandemic and ensure high levels of staff satisfaction and retention.

## 5. Our Business

### 5.1 Finance, Estates & ICT

£29.7M

annual income

£28.6M

operating costs

£1.1M

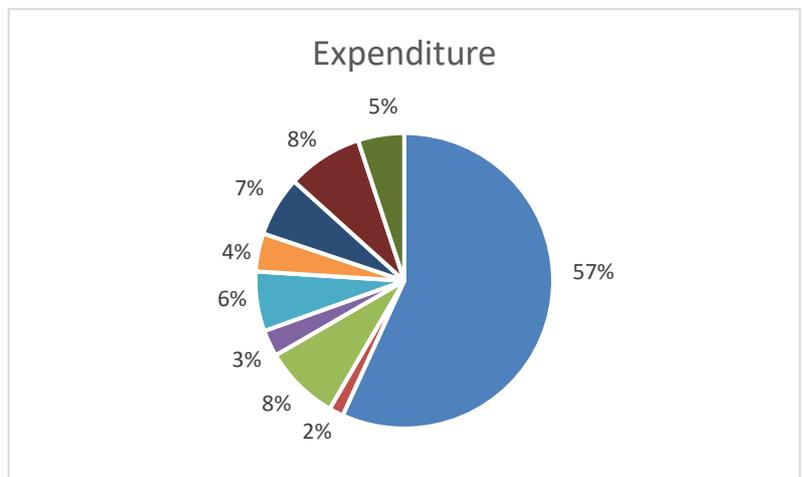
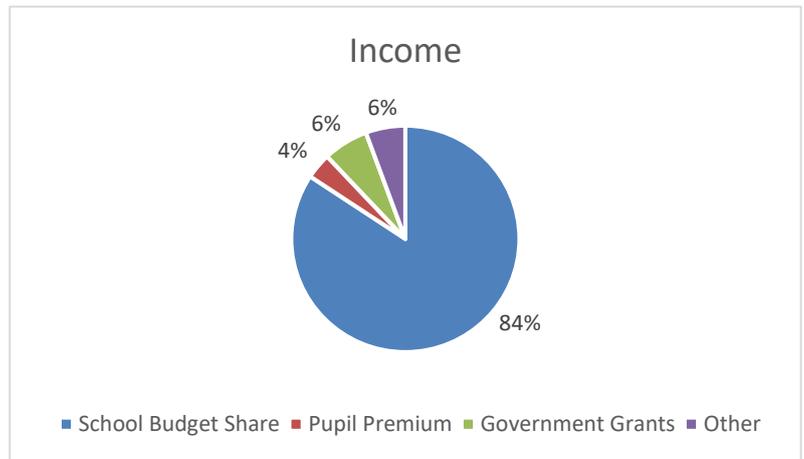
increase in reserves

76%

spent on total staffing costs

£337.5k

Condition Improvement Fund allocation



### 5.4 Successes

The Trust has generated a small surplus for the financial year to add to its existing reserves. Alongside this, balanced budgets have been prepared for 2020-21 and beyond. The financial position of the Trust is now secure. Plans are in place to address budget issues for individual schools where there is a budget concern over time.

Educational and operational policies, procedures and provision have been strengthened. Creation of a Central School Improvement Team and successful integration of Chapeltown Academy into the Trust will provide additional capacity and expertise in order to further improve educational provision. Centralisation of finance and introduction of robust Standard Operating Procedures has improved consistency and accuracy

of financial information across our schools. It has also reduced the risk to the Trust and increased its ability to meet its statutory and regulatory obligations.

Work has started to improve the condition of the Trust's estates and ICT provision. Three year condition improvement and ICT lifecycle plans are being developed in order to maintain our estates and ICT infrastructure and reduce the risk to the Trust over time. A five year Digital Strategy is also under development in order to better utilise ICT to create more efficient ways of working and to better support more innovative ways of learning. Much progress was made on the use of ICT during Lockdown, which now needs to be capitalised upon through a Trust wide approach.

Development of our Procurement strategy has helped to capitalise upon purchasing power and has made significant efficiency savings to date. This work will continue and expand to ensure best value across all areas of our organisation.

## 5.5 Challenges

Inflation continues to be a challenge with funding not increasing at the same rate. The recovery from the pandemic and potential impact on school funding will present a challenge. The increase in employers' pension costs, teaching and support staff pay rises and the new national Funding Formula pose risks that will need careful planning over time. We continue to aim for the correct balance between efficiency and maintain the quality of internal service delivery.

Continuing to find new ways of delivering efficiencies to maximise investment in education presents a challenge in order to ensure our operational delivery model remains effective and compliant whilst delivering great service to our schools.

The condition of some of our school estates poses a risk. Significant investment is needed at one site I order to maintain a Grade II listed building. Plans are in place to address this over time.

Development and roll-out of our Digital Strategy during a pandemic will pose a significant challenge, as will the funding of it, however this development will positively contribute to managing the workload of staff and to the future success of our organisation. Investment in it is therefore a priority.

## 5.6 Priorities

We will continue to develop the financial literacy of staff across the Trust - this includes rolling out training to our Central and school based staff. We will expand internal reporting to include more non-finance colleagues within the trust. We will also continue to further embed our zero-based budgeting process.

Successful implementation of our Digital Strategy will help further develop service quality to our schools, reduce staff workload and facilitate greater collaboration between colleagues and teams.

Execution of our Estates Strategy to maximise the investment in our buildings and to collect and use data in an even more insightful way.