



**Ambition**  
Community Trust

# Meade Hill School



Leading Learning through  
Action-led Research and Innovation

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WHY ARE WE HERE?

the lives of  
communities

# What makes us different?

Ambition Community Trust is a unique brand offering an original approach. We have called this Relational Inclusion. This blends current evidence-informed thinking and approaches around cognition, metacognition and self-regulation and how they are compromised by Adverse Childhood Experiences; Adverse Community Environments; Trauma and Attachment. We know that these factors affect executive functioning, relationships, mental health and well-being therefore we develop our curriculums, timetables, CPD and relational behaviour systems to mitigate the negative effects on learning. We believe that such an educational approach is relevant for all young people from birth to post 16. We believe that this approach enables all pupils to meet their best possible educational outcomes.

# A better culture for all children

- Schools have created climates that unintentionally add secondary pain on top of primary pain through traditional discipline protocols
- Neuroscience and interpersonal neurobiology is showing us all the time that the brain is flexible and open to being re-sculpted if given the opportunity

If our children are going to achieve the academic success they deserve, we must recognize and support and develop their emotional success.

Regardless of their background, children with higher levels of emotional and social well-being achieve better academically and are more engaged in school.

# Therapeutic Team

We recognise that services to support the mental health and wellbeing of pupils are stretched and limited and therefore:

All Trust schools will have access to a range of therapeutic services to support our vision of Relational Inclusion. This will include roles such as : an Educational Psychologist, an Occupational Health Therapist, an Art Therapist, a Speech and Language Therapist, a Trauma Therapist.

This provision will be provided in addition to what schools decide to employ independently and will provide further access for pupils to get support at an earlier point.



# Guiding Principles: Relational Inclusion

## 1. We believe that if a child could do better, they would

Many children and young people don't know why they behave the way they do.

As a result of early negative experiences, their autonomic\* nervous system is convinced that adults cannot be trusted and all environments contain hidden threats. We understand that we all play a role in supporting a child to do better. \*Involuntary or unconscious

## 2. Relationships, Relationships, Relationships

By relationships we mean:

- RELATIONSHIP from the student's perspective
- RELATIONSHIP from the staff's perspective
- The priority given to RELATIONSHIP formation and maintenance from school leadership' (Riley 2011)
- The RELATIONSHIP we have with ourselves and our own well-being.

We understand that positive staff-student relationships have been shown to contribute to students' attendance, academic grades, psychological engagement and reduced disruptive behaviours.

We know that supportive staff-student relationships can also help in overcoming family education disadvantage.

We know we must recognise blocked care\* and our risk of slipping from our social engagement system.

\*When it becomes difficult to remain open and engaged

## 3. We accept all emotions but not all behaviours

We see all behaviours as an opportunity to learn.

We believe in the unconditional acceptance of the emotional experience that lies behind behaviour, while communicating that the behaviour is indeed unacceptable for the child's life as it gets in the way of healthy relationship development or learning.

- We believe that discipline is based on the needs of the young person not our adult wants.
- We develop strategies aimed to work with a student's biology instead of against it.
- We understand that co-regulation must occur before self-regulation can be learnt.
- We know that a child must 'feel safe' and not be told they are safe.

## 4. We identify and address the cause not the symptoms

**Beneath every behaviour there is a feeling.** And beneath each feeling is a need. And when we meet that need rather than focus on the behaviour, we begin to deal with the cause not the symptoms. (Ashleigh Warner)

We understand that complicated behaviour deserves a more complex response which involves a 'state dependent' intervention rather than a one size fits all.

## 5. We foster a culture of compassion and repair

We repeat what we don't repair.

- Compassion to accept the individual experience: why people are suffering and what has happened to them.
- Compassion of understanding: every function is an adaptation and everyone is doing the best they can with the resources they have inside them and around them.
- Compassion of possibility in the here and now: every interaction is an opportunity for repair, reattunement and growth for a positive vision of the future and self.
- Compassion for the importance of voice, choice and empowerment: we give voice and offer choice within our relationships with children, families, staff and are inclusive in the process of transformation.



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## **Vision**

To be a leading light in evidence-informed and innovative relationally - based education, where children experience nurture and success, going on to lead happier, more productive lives.

## **Purpose**

To cultivate educational communities based on emotional safety, relationally-based practices and high-quality teaching leading to positive behaviours, better outcomes and improved life chances.

## Values

- **Compassionate Relationships**

We foster positive, understanding, and respectful connections, encouraging empathy, a sense of belonging, and the capacity to build strong relationships within and beyond the school community.

- **Quality Through Collaboration**

We believe that partnerships with families, communities, and professionals foster innovation and achieve the highest standards of education, whilst nurturing socially aware and compassionate individuals.

- **Equity and Excellence for All**

We are dedicated to personal growth and achievement, celebrating diverse strengths and backgrounds to ensure every individual can thrive and succeed together.

# School Improvement Strategy

This strategy will be bespoke according to the performance of individual schools. Where monitoring and challenge identifies concerns related to the performance of an individual school, a tailored package will be implemented which will include more intensive support.

The strategy is divided into five key areas, each area is broken down into *monitoring and challenge* and *support and development*.

1. Quality of Education
2. School Improvement Team
3. Professional Development For All Staff
4. Leadership Development
5. Relational Inclusion



# Our Schools



**Corrie Primary and Nursery School – Good (2021)**

**Greswell Primary School – Good (2023)**

**Meade Hill School (inc. Castlefield Campus) – Good (2024)**

**Millbrook Primary School – Outstanding (2023)**

**Southern Cross – Good (2023)**

**Tameside Pupil Referral Service – Good (2022)**

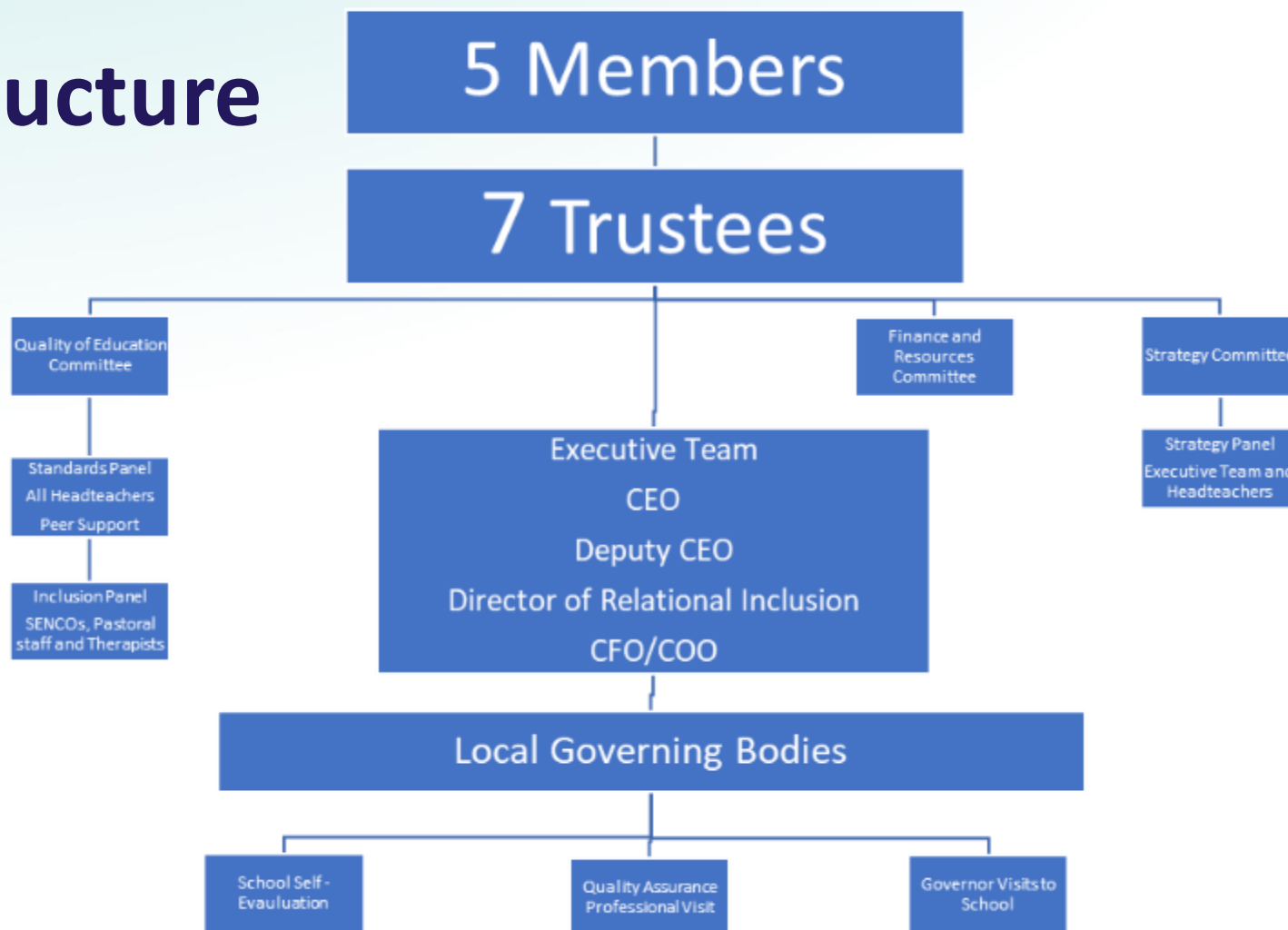
**Broomwood Primary School – Good (2019) (partnership)**

**Gorse Hall Primary – Good (partnership)**

**Russell Scott Primary School – Good (2023) (partnership)**

**Transforming the lives of  
children and their communities**

# Our Structure



**Transforming the lives of  
children and their communities**

The Members of a charitable company, such as an Academy Trust, are the equivalent of shareholders in a commercial company.

This means they:

- are the subscribers to the trust's memorandum of association (where they are founding members);
- may amend the articles of association (the articles include a definition of the trust's charitable objects and governance structure) subject to any restrictions in the articles or in the trust's funding agreement or charity law;
- have the power to appoint and remove the Trustees and hold those Trustees to account for the way that the Academy Trust is operated
- appoint external auditors to ensure that the accounts are independently interrogated.
- guarantee the debts of the Academy Trust – the extent of the guarantee is ten pounds per member if the company goes into insolvent liquidation.

Responsibility to conduct the business of the trust in accordance with company and charity law sits with the Trustees and so Members are 'eyes on and hands off' to avoid compromising the board's discretion in exercising its responsibilities.

Members are kept fully informed regarding trust business. There is regular dialogue between the Trust Board and Members throughout the year to ensure this can be achieved, and Members meet annually.

## ***Jane Sowerby***

Jane is the Assistant Director for Early Help and Schools in Rochdale, having previously been Assistant Director for Education in Tameside. She has held various Head of Primary and Secondary School Improvement roles across Greater Manchester and Yorkshire. Jane has worked in local authority education and SEND leadership roles for over 20 years across several different local authorities but mostly in Greater Manchester. She co-chaired the Greater Manchester Early Education Leaders group and is the lead education director for Greater Manchester's Balanced System transformation programme which aims at changing the focus of speech and language support for children. Jane has a primary education background; trained and worked in London initially and lives in Stockport. Jane is passionate about inclusion and practises relational-based leadership values.

## ***Damian Dallimore***

Greater Manchester Violence Reduction Unit – Director and interim Assistant Director (Police, Crime, Fire and Criminal Justice)  
Damian is Interim Director for Police, Crime, Fire and Criminal Justice at Greater Manchester Combined Authority, leading on a range of GM-wide programmes including Violence Reduction, Serious / Organised Crime and Child and Adolescent safeguarding. Damian has worked in a variety of local government roles across his career, primarily focused on community safety and crime reduction areas of policy, with a particular interest in community-led approaches and working with children and families to address all forms of abuse and exploitation. Damian has a strong connection with the community and voluntary sector across GM and has pioneered community-led programmes to tackle knife crime, violence and their root causes in a range of locations across GM. Damian was previously a Trustee of the Healthy Learning Multi-Academy Trust.

## ***Dr Luke Roberts***

Director of Resolve

Luke has over twenty years' experience working children and young people in conflict. This work has been across the school-to-prison pipeline, from addressing children affected by bullying, to working with young people in custody to address the issues of violence, trauma and poor educational experiences. He has also worked with communities that have been marginalised from the educational system and see how parental experiences of poor educational experiences leave a residual distrust and require a nurturing experience for the family as well as the child.

## ***Diarmuid Currid***

Diarmuid is a veterinary surgeon by profession. He has been a vet for 27 years, and has worked in Manchester, specifically the Tameside area, for 24 of those years. His role is that of clinical director of a companion animal veterinary clinic, which he co-founded in 2000. He is responsible for the day to day running of the practice, involving clinical care, clinical governance, and the promotion of evidence-based medicine in veterinary care. He is also responsible for the delivery of high levels of customer service and ensuring a customer focused culture within the team. He is responsible for the financial performance of the business and is involved in developing strategies for business development. To enhance his understanding of this aspect of his role, he obtained an MBA from the Manchester Alliance Business School at the University of Manchester in 2022. Alongside the business and management aspect to his role, he also has an interest in clinical work, the focus of which is in veterinary dentistry, and he has recently completed a postgraduate qualification in this field.

## ***Diarmuid O'Neill***

Deputy Director Scottish Government Head of Marine Scotland Science with a team of over 300, two research vessels and a science campus.

Several senior policy roles over the last five years in UK Government and Scottish Government on topics covering: International Development, Safeguarding, Brexit and Climate Change. Within these roles managing budgets from £32m to £300m. Chief executive officer for a decade of an international charity working with thousands of street children in nine countries across Africa and South America. Trustee and Chair of several Boards in the UK and USA. Consultant for several Boards of Trustees on the new code of Governance for charities. Co-author of the Bond Safeguarding for Trustees. Operations manager of charity working with marginalized young people through sport and education in inner cities and England. Research scientist for a decade, part of a team that invented technology to measure natural emissions of greenhouse gases.

# Governance

The trustees are also our company directors. The board of trustees manages the business of the academy trust and should focus strongly on the three core functions of governance:

- ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the performance management of staff
- overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent.

Our trustees ensure compliance with the trust's charitable objects and with company and charity law, and adherence to the trust's funding agreement with the Secretary of State.

Our Trust Board includes 7 Trustees covering the wide range of skills and expertise that we require.

# Trustees

<p><b><i>Bernice Kostick</i></b></p>	<p>My Name is Bernice Kostick. I have been the Head Teacher of North Ridge High Specialist Support School since 2007. Prior to this I was a Head Teacher of a special school in Trafford. I have worked in education since 1983. Most of my career has been as a teacher working in the SEN sector for schools within Manchester City Council. I have lived in Manchester throughout my life and was educated in Manchester Schools. I have a B. ED degree in Education, M Sc. in Education Management and I was a national leader of education. I am moving to the end of my career and planning to retire in the summer of 2023. I strongly believe Manchester Children should have a high-quality education provision and especially children with additional needs. I am delighted to be a member of the Trust Board for Ambition Community Trust and offer my services in a voluntary capacity.</p>
<p><b><i>Helen Baker</i></b></p>	<p>Worked in homelessness/supported housing/drugs recovery in Oxford from 2001-2005          Qualified as a social worker 2005 and worked in Older Peoples services and Community Mental Health Team in Bicester until 2009          Moved to Manchester in 2009, worked as social worker/AMHP in Early Intervention Service, CMHT, Gateway service before moving into management positions from 2017-2021          Undertook training contract with Irwin Mitchell commencing in Feb 2021. Training included working Court of Protection, Public Law and Human Rights and Medical Negligence departments.          Qualified as a solicitor with Irwin Mitchell in Feb 2023. Now work as a solicitor in the Public Law and Human Rights team in Manchester, specialising in Court of Protection and education work. Recent education work includes EHCP appeals, securing a school place for a girl who had previously been out of school for almost 2 years and a secondary school admissions appeal.</p>
<p><b><i>Stephen Carroll</i></b></p>	<p>Stephen recently retired as the Business Director of Ace Centre, a national charity supporting people with communication and/or physical disabilities.          He has a finance and IT &amp; HR background and worked for the Ace Centre for 19 years providing support in Assistive Technology as well as managing the business functions.</p>
<p><b><i>Nadia Baig</i></b></p>	<p>NHS</p>

<p><b><i>Stephen Brock</i></b></p>	<p>Stephen has over 25 years' experience working with children, families and communities. He has over 20 years statutory social work experience. Stephen now works as a Social Work Consultant. He is passionate about the work he has done and continues to do, and has been fortunate to have had several valued teachers in life along the way. Stephen obtained a Hons BA in Sociology and Media Information Studies through University of Western Ontario in and Master if Social Work through Wilfrid Laurier University. Prior, Stephen has worked in the area of community development and youth development projects in Canada.</p>
<p><b><i>Karen Samples</i></b></p>	<p>Director of Education in Trafford</p>
<p><b><i>Elaine Horridge</i></b></p>	<p>I have been involved in education for 48 years, having gained QTS in 1974. I am passionate about education and improving the life chances for all children. It is essential to have high quality learning and teaching and to constantly seek for new ideas. I understand the importance of creating effective learning environments and a varied and interesting curriculum to increase the learning potential and achievements of pupils.</p> <p>I have worked in primary schools in Oldham and Tameside.</p> <p>In 1997 I was appointed as Head teacher at a failing school in Tameside. Rapid changes enabled this school to come out of Special Measures within 18 months.</p> <p>In 2000 I became Head teacher of an Outstanding primary school in Tameside and in 2013 was asked by Tameside LA to become Executive Head teacher of another school which was facing huge challenges. This school received a Good OFSTED outcome within 12 months.</p> <p>I retired in 2016. I am now a Governor at 3 schools: Vice Chair of a CE primary school in Oldham, Vice Chair of a VC primary school in Tameside and I am Chair of the Management Committee at Tameside Pupil Referral Service.</p>