



Infinity Academies Trust



Annual Report 2020/21

*Ready to learn; Prepared to flourish*

## Welcome to the Trust

At Infinity Academies Trust, children are at the heart of everything we do. We strive every day to add value to our schools, to enable them to be even better places for our children and young people to learn and grow.

Our Trust brings together Lincolnshire-based primary schools who share a spirit of genuine partnership. We serve a wide range of communities and are made up of different kinds of schools. It is this diversity and difference that gives us our strength and broadens our knowledge base of what works best for children.

We are delighted that we are a 'Church of England MAT' so our academies include those with Church of England distinctiveness, whether VA or VC, former community schools and also stand-alone trusts.

Deeply rooted in Christian faith, we embrace the core values of Hope, Love, Unity, Integrity and Curiosity so that all, are "Ready to learn; Prepared to flourish."

As a Trust we promote the individuality of our schools by providing them with the freedom to develop their own strengths and distinct characters in order to meet the unique needs of their communities. Our schools value maintaining this individuality, whilst maximising the benefits of being part of a larger network and organisation.

Being part of a Trust gives our staff access to exciting professional development opportunities, provides the chance for children to interact with others from different schools and offers challenge and support to school leaders through effective governance.

We are driven by a passion to do our very best for the children in our schools and we know that by working together we can achieve things that we could not do alone.

**Mr Gavin Booth**  
CEO

**Mr Sean Westaway**  
Trust Chair

*"He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love."*

Ephesians 4:16



# Vision, Mission and Values

## Our Vision

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*To create a community where everyone is ready to learn and prepared to flourish.*

As a deeply Christian Church Trust aiming to serve the common good, we enable both Church and Community schools to flourish. All our children need and deserve schools with loving cultures, aspirational curriculums and inspiring provision. We provide children with the skills, knowledge and experiences to thrive academically, socially and spiritually so that they are prepared for a future full of opportunity.

With Jesus' promise of life in all its fullness we strive every day to ensure our children know they are valued, understood, supported and loved. We share their hopes and aspirations and provide a well-rounded education that celebrates success.

The future our children are going into is increasingly uncertain, and we need to enable them to become adaptable, resilient, confident, tolerant and highly literate individuals both for their lives today and tomorrow.

We won't do this in isolation. We know that, "We are strongest working together in Unity" (1 Corinthians 12:12) therefore we will work beyond our Trust with local schools, the community and the Church. In addition, we will work more broadly across the region and system, so that we can learn from each other, harness best practice, access the latest research, and secure the expertise of those beyond the school system who share our moral purpose for children.

**We want our children to flourish across their lives.**

## Our Mission

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*Infinity Academies Trust exists to improve the outcomes and opportunities of every pupil and every colleague working in our academies.*

## Our Values

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### Integrity

"Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth."

1 John 3:18



### Love

"Let all that you do be done with love."

Corinthians 16:14



### Hope

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."

John 1:5



### Curiosity

"Call to me and I will answer you and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known."

Jeremiah 33:3



### Unity

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

Galatians 3:28

# Working with Church Schools

Infinity Academies Trust is very proud to work in partnership with the Diocese of Lincoln.

Our articles of association are based on the Church of England model articles which means that the majority of our members are approved by the Diocese. We also ensure that the Church is represented at local level through our Academy Development Committees.

We believe whole-heartedly that working with both Church of England and Community schools enhances our Trust and its ability to meet the needs of all its communities.

In order to provide life in abundance for all who attend, it is with humility, grace, compassion and expertise that Church schools are lead within Infinity Academies Trust. Asking, "What is the work of God in this place?" (John Wesley) allows each school to flourish in its own richly unique context, thus ensuring that each community is well served.

In an educational world of many competing voices it can be difficult to be courageous; with relationships at their core, Infinity Academies Trust church schools are supported to elevate the importance of the school's vision and focus on what it truly means to be an effective Christian learning community.



## Infinity Academies Trust develop/support church schools by:

- Developing the Christian vision, values into practice, Church School action group
- SIAMS SEF writing workshops as part of the School Improvement cycle "If you don't measure what you value, you end up valuing what other people measure"
- Lesson study/Peer Review opportunities focussing on the impact of the school's Christian vision
- Networking opportunities to share good practice
- Work symbiotically with the Lincoln DBE, via the SLA, to ensure that through our distinctive Christian vision and values we are fulfilling our commitment to their vision of "Excellence. Exploration. Encouragement"
- Working with leaders at all levels to ensure exciting, engaging curriculums meet the needs of learners within their specific context
- Securing expert financial management to ensure that children are able to access opportunities which enable flourishing (residential, curriculum experiences, extra-curricular opportunities, staffing etc)

## Trust development during 2020/21

The Trust has continued to grow and develop during the 2020-21 academic year despite the difficulties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

We were delighted to formally welcome Pinchbeck East CE Primary Academy and Spalding Primary Academy to the Trust in March 2021 and begin our work with them. The school teams are now well established as part of the Trust and all of the Trust-wide systems and processes are embedded and having a positive impact.

This means the Trust now consists of almost 2,000 pupils aged three to eleven and over 280 colleagues across seven different schools.

In 2020-21 we also began to implement the school improvement strategy. The strategy clearly lays out how the Education Director and CEO will work with schools through routine visits to provide support and challenge. The document also provides School Leaders with helpful templates, the overview of our Data Strategy, information about the Professional Development on offer and key milestones in the annual calendar of the Trust.

Due to the pandemic, unfortunately we were not able to realise the professional development offer that we had originally planned. We were delighted, however, to publish our 'Great ideas for Remote Learning' booklet which was shared across hundreds of schools nationwide. We also hosted our first InfiniTED, shining a spotlight on inspiring practice across our schools.

2020-21 also saw the further development of our Trust Head Office based at St Nicholas CE Primary Academy. The Trust created a training suite for up to 30 people, a separate kitchen space, a board room, two offices and a reception space through re-purposing some unused rooms in the school. This means that the Trust is now able to host training events and welcome visitors without taking up space needed by pupils within our schools.

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## Our Context

Number of Pupils:

**1,940**

Number of Staff:

**288**

Number of Academies:

**7**

Number of schools outside the Trust currently being supported:

**4**

## Our System Leaders

Local Leaders of Education:

**5**

Local Leader of Governance:

**1**

Specialist Leaders of Education:

**4**

Evidence Lead in Education:

**1**

## Planned development for 2021/22 – Systems and Relationships



This year has been described as the year of ‘Systems and Relationships’.

We have designed a range of systems that, after various delays due to the pandemic, we hope to be able to fully implement in 2021/22. Starting the year with seven schools, we also want to build strong relationships with colleagues across the Trust, so that by working together we can fulfil our vision.

We have a full-time, experienced and professional team to support both our academies and also those outside the Trust who have been signposted to us. The central team consists of a full-time CEO, Education Director, Finance and HR Director, Operations Director, Trust Teaching and Learning Lead and an Administration Officer.

We are delighted to begin the year working with an eighth school and hope that during the year both the Diocese of Lincoln and the Regional Schools Commissioner of the Department for Education will give their permission for us to begin consultation with parents and staff for that school to join Infinity Academies Trust.

We are also eager to share our expertise with the wider network. The Local Authority have commissioned the Trust to support a CofE village primary school; the Department for Education have also requested that we provide a Trust and School Improvement Offer to a second CofE primary school and we are also providing informal support to a number of other primary schools.

In addition, we work closely with Kyra and the LEAD Teaching School Hub to deliver professional development for many schools across Lincolnshire. For example, we are key deliverers for School Initial Teaching Training provision in the locality. We also lead the Executive Educators Membership for Forum Strategy Group to develop the system leaders of tomorrow.

It is hoped that some of these schools will consider becoming formal members of Infinity Academies Trust and we are delighted to have conversations with other schools on this journey.

## Professional Development



In our theme of ‘Systems and Relationships’ we will put CPD for our staff at the heart of our offer, building on our regular Headteacher and ‘Deputies’ meetings.

We began the year with the Trust-wide Training Day hosted by Boston United Football Club in their new stadium. The CEO and Education Director delivered key notes on the work of the Trust for the New Year alongside external experts, Mary Meredith and Steve Russell.

This work will continue with a series of development meetings for middle leaders across the Trust alongside moderation meetings for all classroom teachers. These will be led by our Trust Teaching and Learning Lead and Catherine Caldwell, an external expert in Writing.

Later in the year it is hoped that a second ‘Great Ideas Booklet’ will be produced, sharing the great work from within our Trust to support our classroom practitioners. InfiniTED will also take place in 2022, giving an opportunity for a colleague from each school to record a ‘TED’ talk and for all staff to have the chance to view the talks on the same evening at a virtual Trust-wide CPD session.

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# School Improvement Model

A strength of the Trust is our school improvement model, which draws on the considerable experience of our Central Team.

Careful planning has taken place to ensure that the work of the CEO, Education Director and Trust Teaching and Learning Lead dovetail to provide effective support and challenge to our academies.

The CEO focusses on pastoral support and visits all Headteachers twice in each assessment cycle to ensure that the Central Team is fully aware of the wider challenges our academies are facing.

Our Education Director provides a series of three visits to schools in each assessment cycle. The first visit considers the strategy for improvement each school has in place and provides support

for leaders in writing and monitoring the School Development Plan, the SEF and then distilling these into a small number of actions to deliver day in, day out improvement. The second visit considers implementation and will involve conversations with a range of colleagues, visits to classrooms and then advice for leaders. The final meeting in the cycle considers the impact of the action, with a review of assessment data and the completion of reports to Academy Development Committees.

The Teaching and Learning Lead will then provide detailed support on the delivery of the curriculum in our academies. This could include audits of certain subject areas and coaching for leaders and teachers as they strive to improve their practice.

# Our Services

Schools joining Infinity Academies will benefit from a range of services supported by experienced and capable professionals both employed centrally and through high quality external partners.

The Trust offers the following services:



School Improvement



DATA Strategy



Finance



HR



Operational Management



Estates Management



Health and Safety



Risk Management

All our academies also have access to a range of Trust-wide resources and subscriptions. In 2020/21 these included:

- **Insight Assessment Tracking**
- **NFER Assessments**
- **CPOMS**
- **Dataplan HR and payroll**
- **Every compliance software**
- **Stallard Kane Health and Safety**
- **HY Education Legal Services**
- **ARK ICT Support**
- **PrimarySite websites**



## Our Schools

## Gipsey Bridge Academy



Based in a remote rural area and as the smallest school in the Trust, it would be easy to assume that a school like ours could be forgotten about within a larger organisation – but that simply isn't the case.

In fact, being part of the Infinity family helps us to celebrate all of the great things that are happening at Gipsey Bridge. Through opportunities such as InfiniTED, Great Ideas for Remote Learning and the annual Trust-wide Training Day, our staff have been empowered to showcase their talents and to see that they have an important place within the Trust.

We have also seen huge benefits from the support of the Trust's Education Director, who has a clear, laser-like focus on achieving the best outcomes for our children. Working in partnership with us, offering a blend of professional dialogue and challenge has really helped us refine and reinvigorate different elements of our provision.

The introduction of joint curriculum planning alongside Spilsby Primary Academy and St Nicholas CE Academy has also provided the opportunity for collaboration. With a clear framework in place, we have been able to adapt the curriculum to suit each context and share resources and ideas across the schools. This is allowing us to have an additional focus on broadening horizons, building cultural awareness across our different communities and making the most of additional enrichment opportunities and trips that would not necessarily be available to us otherwise.

**Andrew Clarke,**  
Executive Headteacher

## Pinchbeck East CE Primary Academy and Spalding Primary Academy



For everyone at Pinchbeck East CE Primary and Spalding Primary, joining a Trust that shared our core values was vitally important.

Even from the very first conversations with Infinity Academies Trust, there was a resonance of values, a real connect in terms of our ethos and a shared ambition to provide the very best for the children, staff and communities connected to our schools.

As part of the Trust, we know that the individual identities of our schools matter, the support that we receive is bespoke to our unique contexts, with the key focus being on ensuring that children are at the centre of all that we do.

Our staff also feel valued, that they are listened to and that their voices can be heard. This percolates right the way through the organisation – across every school and in every role. The Trust-wide Training Day, for example, was an opportunity for staff across the Trust to come together and build relationships.

We have also seen the benefits of cluster working groups developing across our schools, with specialists from each school coming together to share ideas, collaborate and find solutions to provide the best for our pupils.

Even after just a few short months, we have already seen so many benefits. From the ongoing partnership and professional dialogue with the CEO and Education Director, to the contributions of the central team to ensure the smooth-running of everyday operations, the support we receive is excellent.

**Andrew Raistrick,**  
Executive Headteacher



## Spilsby Primary Academy



As one of the founding schools in the Trust, Spilsby Primary Academy has seen the real benefits of Infinity's growth over the last few years.

In particular, this has created greater opportunities for networking and collaboration, which has not only enhanced the provision for our children, but it has also empowered our staff to be the best they can be.

When I became a new Headteacher, it was reassuring to know that I could turn to the CEO for pastoral support. Having that sounding board there has been worth its weight in gold and it has been brilliant to see this ethos of genuine partnership growing as the Trust's capacity has increased.

Alongside Headteacher and Senior Leader meetings, our year group leaders and staff with a variety of specialisms now have the opportunity to work with colleagues from other schools.

In the case of reading, writing and maths, for example, staff have been able to think about their subject areas and make incremental changes to develop our provision.

After the challenges we have all faced during the pandemic, this has really helped to re-energise us all, opening up opportunities for staff to be creative and providing key opportunities for peer support and professional development.

This has all been underpinned by the increase in operational support provided by the central team. This oversight and investment from the Trust is a real comfort, as it allows leaders and teachers to focus on ensuring that our children get the best deal, every day.

**Andrew Clarke,**  
Executive Headteacher

## St Nicholas CE Primary Academy



It is hard to put into words the impact that joining Infinity Academies Trust has had on St Nicholas CE Primary Academy.

It would not be an overstatement to say that it has completely transformed every aspect of life at our school.

As the Trust's first sponsored academy, for the first time in a long time we feel like we have a place in a family – that the Trust believes in our children, our staff and our community and is absolutely invested in helping us to achieve our full potential.

Becoming part of Infinity gave us roots, allowing us to build a vision for our new school and look to the future. In everything we do at St Nicholas we aim to "let our light shine" and that has been underpinned by the support of specialists across the Trust, they have helped us to lay the foundations and are now the guiding light on our journey.

As well as practical support with the nuts and bolts of building a successful school, there has been significant investment in the school site, the introduction of Trust-wide systems and operating procedures that have allowed me and my team to focus on the quality of education.

We know that there is very much an Infinity quality standard in all that we do, there are agreed approaches to school improvement, teaching and learning and assessment, all contributing to driving aspiration and expectation.

Empowered by this, it has been wonderful to see different people are starting to lead in their fields, working with other like-minded colleagues across schools, undertaking joint curriculum planning and writing moderation, as well as sharing their own expertise and experiences through initiatives such as InfiniTED and Great Ideas for Remote Learning.

Our children are now proud of their school, proud of the family they belong to. Parents can also see the investment in their children, that we love their children and are doing our very best for them – that's what really counts.

**Fiona Booth,**  
Headteacher

## St Thomas' CE Primary Academy



St Thomas' is proud to be one of the Church of England primary schools represented within Infinity Academies Trust.

While we have a distinct Christian ethos of "encouraging each other and overflowing with hope", this sits beautifully with the Trust's vision and values.

We know that the Trust celebrates our individuality and we appreciate being able to work alongside other church schools and non-church schools across Lincolnshire. The recent Trust-wide Training Day solidified in my mind that we're all in this together, for the same purpose. We may have seven different contexts, but across every school, at every level, everyone is part of a child's outcome at our Trust - that is something that is incredibly special.

The relationships that we have built through our work with the Trust's central team, Headteacher and Senior Leader meetings and cluster meetings enable us to ensure that we remain fresh in our approach. By working together with like-minded colleagues, we are encouraged to share best practice and expertise and to identify solutions to take back to our own schools.

Initiatives such as writing moderation have had a really positive impact for staff, allowing them to share their ideas but take other suggestions on board too. Through InfiniTED we have also seen the breadth of high-quality knowledge and specialism across the Trust. Every school has had an opportunity to shine, and staff feel valued, appreciated and empowered.

It has also been wonderful to see the children realising that they are part of something bigger too, writing letters to pupils at other schools, taking part in the Infinity Cup and having access to more opportunities as a result of Trust collaborations.

**Joanne Sharples,**  
Headteacher

## Wyberton Primary Academy



Being part of a Trust like Infinity is like being part of a family, it widens up your community beyond your own school gates.

The Trust recognises that each of our schools have different characteristics, personalities and contexts, so we are all encouraged to follow our own paths to be the best we can be.

For Wyberton, this is incredibly important. While we share the five core values of the Trust, we also have the freedom to shape our own curriculum to fit the unique needs and requirements of our community.

As the leader of an Infinity academy, I appreciate the collaboration, trust, emotional and practical support that being part of the Trust brings.

Having been through a pandemic, the fact that we were part of a Trust made an incredibly challenging situation so much more manageable. We were part of a collective group of headteachers and leaders who could support one another with the challenges it brought. The CEO was always on hand to steer us through the toughest of times and to provide the advice, guidance and pastoral support that was invaluable for me and my team.

As our schools have begun to return to normality, it has been brilliant to work alongside colleagues to share ideas and resources, to celebrate innovations across our schools and to invest in staff through the development of clusters and a range of CPD programmes.

It is wonderful to know that we all have a shared purpose, and that collectively we are all driven by a passion for putting children, their families and our communities first.

**Sarah Paul,**  
Headteacher

# Key People



## Gavin Booth Chief Executive Officer

Gavin is the CEO and Accounting Officer for Infinity Academies Trust and leads the Executive Team. His role is to work with the Chair of the Trust and Board of Trustees to deliver on the vision and strategic ambitions for our schools and the Trust.

He is responsible for building and developing the relationships between our schools, our staff and our pupils to maximise the opportunities and outcomes for everyone.

He also works with a wide range of external agencies to ensure our Trust remains up to date and able to offer our pupils the very best provision.

As an employer of over 280 staff and working with nearly 2000 pupils Gavin ensures the Trust meets all of its legal responsibilities, is financially sustainable and is fostering and developing the talents of its team for the benefits of our pupils.



## Sean Westaway Chair of Trustees

Sean is the Chair of Trustees for Infinity and leads the Board of Trustees. He ensures the Trust Board works effectively to support and challenge the Executive Team in delivering on the ambition set out for the Trust and ensures that Governance at all levels is professional, well-trained and setting high expectations for our schools.

He receives and reviews regular reports from the Trust on all aspects of its work including the performance of our schools and the financial position. He leads the regular Trust Board meetings where the Executive Team presents updates on all aspects of the Trust's work.



## Paul K Ainsworth Education Director

Paul is a member of the Executive Team, oversees School Improvement across the Trust and works very closely with School Leaders to monitor the performance of each of our schools.

He visits the schools regularly and provides support to enable them to continue to develop and improve what they do. He is also responsible for coordinating the Trust's professional development offer, providing coaching/mentoring to senior leaders and for sharing good practice across our schools.

Paul provides detailed analysis to the CEO and Trust Board on the performance of our schools, their strengths and areas for development and on succession planning. He is also an LLE and provides school improvement support on a commissioned basis for schools.



## Jackie Hawkesworth Finance and HR Director

Jackie is responsible for the Trust's Finances and Human Resources, working alongside School Business Managers & Bursars in each of our schools. She is a member of the Executive Team and provides advice to the CEO and the Trust on all financial and HR matters. Her role is to review and monitor the Trust's spending plans, lead on our People Strategy and ensures the Trust continues to be financially sustainable. Jackie works individually with schools to enable them to meet their strategic aims in these crucial areas.



## Michelle Dales Operations Director

Michelle has recently joined the Executive Team as the Trust's Operations Director. Her role is to support our schools with Health & Safety, Premises and Governance. She provides guidance to School Leaders, Governors and School Business Managers as well as reporting on these key areas to the Executive Team and Trust Board. Michelle is responsible for the Trust's compliance in these crucial areas and manages the relationship with some of our key external partners including our IT and Health and Safety providers. She also oversees the Due Diligence and onboarding process of new schools joining the Trust.



## John Slater Trust Teaching and Learning Lead

John is a member of the Central Team, overseeing Teaching and Learning across the Trust. He works closely with key leaders and teachers and is involved in the monitoring of the core subjects, ensuring that the standards of teaching and learning are consistently high and that our children have access to the best possible opportunities and experiences. John is also responsible for coordinating the Trust's professional networks, enabling our colleagues to get together, share what is working well and have those open professional discussions that allow colleagues to grow and become even better at what they do. John is also an Induction Tutor for some of the ECTs within our Trust, as well as supporting SCITT trainees across our locality (both as a Programme Tutor and as a Trainer).



## Audrey Martin Trust Office Administrator

Audrey recently joined us as the Trust Office Administrator. She brings with her nearly 30 years of administrative experience. Her role is to provide support to the Executive Team and ensure the smooth every day running of the office. Audrey is responsible for the upkeep of the Trust Website as well as helping to organise Trust training events in our new training suite. She also works with our Senior Leaders and Business Managers to ensure websites and operating systems are kept up to date.

## School Leaders:

Mr Andrew Clarke: Gipsey Bridge Academy

Mr Andrew Clarke: Spilsby Primary Academy

Mr Andrew Raistrick: Pinchbeck East CE Primary Academy

Mr Andrew Raistrick: Spalding Primary Academy

Mrs Fiona Booth: St Nicholas CE Primary Academy

Miss Joanne Sharples: St Thomas' CE Primary Academy

Ms Sarah Paul: Wyberton Primary Academy



## Infinity Academies Trust

Infinity Academies Trust  
Woad Farm Road  
Boston  
Lincolnshire  
PE21 0EF

Tel: 01205 345101  
Email: [enquiries@infinityacademies.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@infinityacademies.co.uk)  
[www.infinityacademies.co.uk](http://www.infinityacademies.co.uk)