



THE STOUR FEDERATION SPINE



OUR CORE PRINCIPLE: ALIGNED AUTONOMY

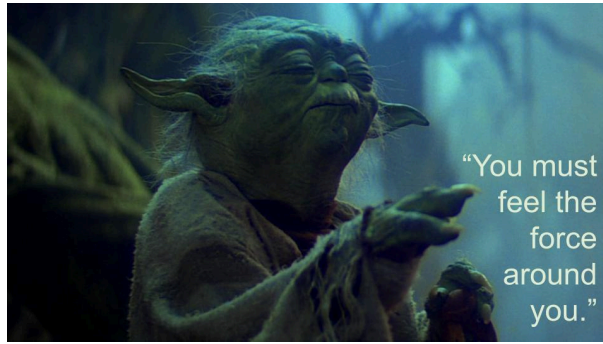
We balance collective consistency (working as one Trust) with self-determination (trusting you to innovate). We aim to provide clarity, not control, ensuring you have the freedom to be the expert in your classroom while being supported by the whole Trust.

Why Alignment? Alignment ensures we function effectively as a unified system. We share the same Trust mission and values, guaranteeing that all staff and children benefit immediately from our best collective practice, expertise, resources, and reputation. Clarity is paramount, ensuring that rules are focused on clarity rather than control.

Why Autonomy? Autonomy is foundational to professional expertise and personal success. It ensures that micromanagement is avoided, which otherwise breeds indifference. Leadership and personal accountability are founded on ownership and self-direction. If we stifle variation, we eliminate the opportunity for learning from different effective practices and cripple flexibility necessary to respond to changing needs.

The Force of Collective Advantage (The Trust Dividend)

By committing to this framework of aligned autonomy, we actively pursue a collaborative advantage, which results in a valuable Trust Dividend. This dividend represents the accumulated value generated by colleagues across the Trust making better-informed decisions more often, over time.



Through active participation in collaborative networks like our Communities of Practice (CoPs), you contribute directly to this collective strength by enhancing teaching quality, improving pupil outcomes, and developing a supportive professional community. This collaborative advantage strengthens us, making the entire Trust more than the sum of its individual parts, which allows our schools to feel the force of shared success.

THE SIX CRITICAL QUESTIONS FOR ORGANISATIONAL CLARITY

Based on our commitment to organisational health and alignment), we regularly revisit Patrick Lencioni's six critical questions. The answers provide a consistent framework for everyone's decision-making.



1. Why do we exist?

Our "North Star" is flourishing. We want every child to feel safe, valued, and inspired through "unreasonable hospitality" – the belief that everyone deserves to live life in all its fullness.

2. How do we behave?

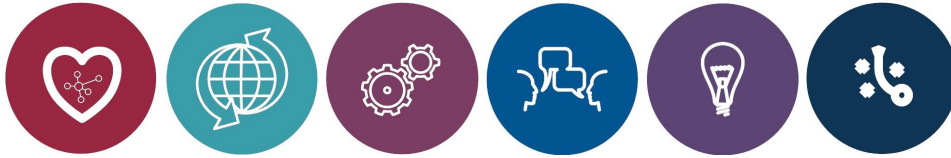
We live our RESPECT values: Relationships, Excellence, Service, Passion, Ethics, Collaboration, and Trust. We commit to Kaizen: making small, consistent changes every day to improve our culture and teaching. We commit to collaboration and trust for horizontal improvement across all our schools rather than working in silos.



[The Stour Federation Way](#) is the set of principles guiding continuous improvement and mutual respect for all people. This is our philosophy for creating an ethic of excellence where everyone feels valued and supported.

3. What do we do?

We build high-performing schools that develop the 6Cs in every child: Character, Citizenship, Collaboration, Communication, Creativity, and Critical Thinking. We go "unreasonably beyond" just academic outcomes to provide a well-rounded education.

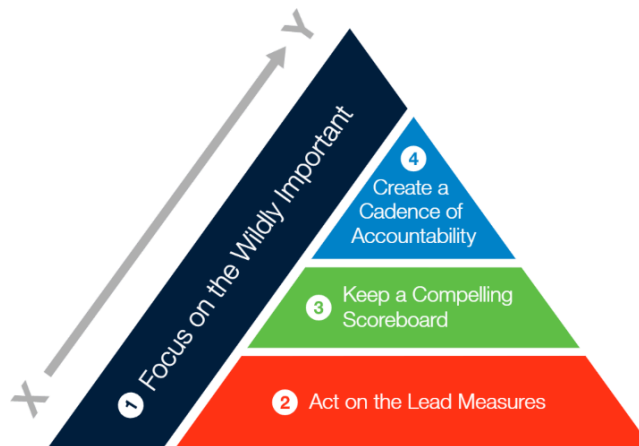


4. How will we succeed?

We achieve success by building an ecosystem driven by the principles and strategies outlined in our [2030 Blueprint](#):

5. What's the most important now?

Our current focus is closing the execution gap and championing inclusion. We use the 4 Disciplines of Execution to ensure our plans become results, specifically by removing barriers to learning before they even arise.



6. Who must do what?

- **Individual Agency:** Every professional is responsible for taking ownership and showing self-direction in their work.
- **School Level:** Headteachers and school teams hold primary responsibility for context-specific decisions regarding local pedagogy and resource deployment.
- **Trust Level:** Trust Improvement Leaders (TILs) reinforce the sense that we are one organisation and provide evidence-informed guidance, expertise, and support to ensure system-wide consistency. The Trust SENDCO ensures system alignment for provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs and works to develop staff expertise.

| Spine | An Aligned Academy... |
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| Mission and values | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● answers the 6 critical questions every day. ● lives its Individual school values and Trust RESPECT values. ● focuses on organisational health - focus on being healthy as well as being smart. |
| Workload | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● keeps things simple to free staff from bureaucracy. ● Follows the Trust's Workload Charter. ● focuses on feedback rather than marking. ● uses directed time in staff meetings for collaborative planning and subject leadership. ● eliminate unnecessary data burdens. ● undertakes regular staff surveys. ● seek opportunities to collaborate to avoid duplication. |
| Curriculum | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● adheres to the Trust's curriculum principles. ● uses the core processes for reading, writing and maths. ● incorporates Protective Behaviours into the curriculum. ● embeds the 6Cs into every subject. |
| Teaching | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● uses evidence informed pedagogy through Walkthrus. ● understands true inclusion; the classroom is the strongest intervention. ● evaluates teaching through pupil book studies. |
| Assessment and feedback | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● handles assessment in EYFS through EExREC Beyond Baseline Assessment tools. ● limits data drops to three per year. |
| Behaviour | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● teaches a behaviour curriculum. ● has clear behaviour routines that ensure learning ● uses a wide repertoire of behaviour strategies including restorative practice and sanctions. |
| Personal Development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● prioritises outdoor play and learning. ● advocates for a smartphone free childhood. ● has a planned enrichment offer (e.g. 11b411). |
| Safeguarding and Attendance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● follows the suite of Trust safeguarding policies. ● uses CPOMS effectively. ● participates in annual KCSiE quizzes to inform annual statutory training for staff, DSLs and governors. ● attends termly DSL network meetings. |
| Inclusion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● champions inclusion through the EEF 5 a day approach and high quality adaptive teaching. ● uses the menu of approved SEND evidence-based interventions. ● embeds the use of the SEND Graduated Approach cycles and the Identification of SEND, Pupil Profiles, ILPs and EHCP tracking documents. ● trains Thrive practitioners to support mental health and wellbeing. |
| Talent Management and QA | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● uses the 4 Disciplines of Execution school improvement model.. ● grows great people through appraisal. ● invests in staff through Communities of Practice. ● uses our employee wellbeing scheme. |

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| <p>Meetings</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● runs meetings that are healthy and efficient meetings as per Workload Charter ● engages with local consortia schools. ● attends Trust leadership team meetings and offsites. |
| <p>Governance</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● follows the Terms of Governance and Scheme of Delegation. ● has at least 4 Local Academy Council meetings a year. ● attends termly Chairs Advisory Group meetings. ● nominates a Safeguarding Governor and SEND Governor in line with the role descriptions. |
| <p>Finance</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● follows the Financial Management Policy. ● uses Access for Education budgets and finance. |
| <p>IT</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● has a Cyber response plan template. ● follows the suite of IT policies. ● uses Google Workspace and Basecamp to create and collaborate. |
| <p>Estates/ Health and Safety</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● uses EVisits to plan school trips. ● supports the Trust with Condition Improvement Fund bids. ● works with YMD Boon for health and safety compliance. |
| <p>Marketing and identity</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● keeps their school website up to date, including a Trust page. ● uses Trust job descriptions and recruitment packs on DfE Teacher Vacancies |