



ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT 2024-25



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Introduction from the Chair of Trustees

David Tucker, Chair

It is with great pleasure that I present the 2024-25 Annual Impact Report for Liberty Academy Trust.

Whilst the Trust is still in its infancy, I am so proud of the progress that we've made together over the last three years. We have overcome some significant challenges and are now seeing evidence of a very high level of education, support for every learner and a culture of excellence being embedded across the whole Trust.

I know that all the trustees really enjoy visiting and meeting the school communities. We're always impressed how engaged and ambitious the pupils are and how impatient they are for pathways to successful careers.

We've also been really excited to support the setting up of the Liberty Research School this year as part of our Research and Development programme. This is providing many links both nationally and internationally within autism research which puts the Trust at the forefront of curriculum development.

We're now looking forward to overseeing growth in the Trust in both capacity and impact.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all our academy leaders, staff, pupils, parents, trustees and local governing bodies whose efforts and commitment have made this year the success that it is. As we look ahead, we remain focused on ensuring that every school and satellite within Liberty Academy Trust is a place where our young people thrive, staff feel valued and where we make our communities proud.



David Tucker
Chair of the Board

Introduction from the CEO

Dr Nic Crossley, CEO



It is always interesting (and grounding actually) to reflect on achievements over the previous year. Drawn into the day-to-day business of school life, we can often overlook successes and instead focus on the challenges, so this impact report is an opportunity to celebrate the individual and collective achievements of 2024-25.

Putting this report together, I had many 'Wow!' moments and I hope you will do too.

We remain committed to growth; our schools offer autistic children and young people opportunities for success they are often denied in mainstream or previous settings and the need for more schools like ours is great.

Our staff are passionate and committed advocates for all children and young people and their expertise contributes hugely to what pupils can do and can achieve.

That success is evidenced in the exam results on pages 14-15 and therefore shows that our approach works. With high aspirations and expectations for staff and pupils alike, we are working towards an enhanced quality of life for all.

I am incredibly proud to lead this organisation and every visit to schools and discussions with children fills me with joy, reinforcing why I came into education in the first place.

My aim is to ensure every child has access to a valuable learning experience, develops confidence in their own identity, and knows their worth in society - and the world, so that their quality of life is enhanced and they in turn support the next generation to experience the same.

I will never waiver from that endeavour and I hope this report illustrates my continued commitment.

Dr Nic Crossley
Chief Executive Officer



Our Strategy



Established in December 2022, Liberty Academy Trust is a growing family of three schools and one satellite provision providing an exceptional education for autistic children and young people.

Our Vision is to deliver an exceptional education for our children and young people that meets their needs, aspirations, and interests, and which prepares them well for adulthood.

The Outcomes We Want to See

Knowledge and understanding of autism in schools and across society increases.

All children and young people have access to a broad and balanced education, so that they achieve success from starting points.

Children and adults alike are able to cope well with the challenges of life.

Our Strategic Foundations

LEADING through accountability and moral responsibility

The Trust acts as a system leader to influence the sector for good and contributes positively for the public benefit.

The Trust provides training, support, and guidance to special and mainstream schools alike to enhance the experience of autistic children and young people.

Trust governance is seen as a strength across the sector.



DRIVING excellence in education for autistic children and young people

The QoL Framework (pupils) is recognised as a key driver of excellence in supporting access, engagement, and success.

Pupil progress accelerates from starting points, ensuring all are well-prepared for the next stages in education, training, and/or employment.

Our approach to Safeguarding is recognised as leading practice.



SUPPORTING resilience and well-being

The QoL Framework (staff) is recognised as a key driver of excellence in supporting flexible working, learning opportunities, and benefits to get the best out of our people.

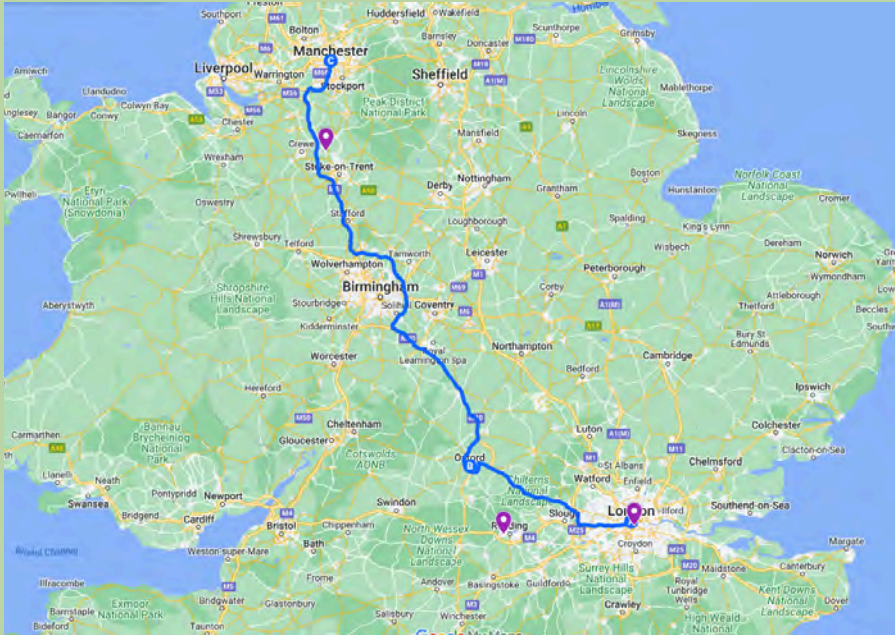
Targeted early support for pupils is available in each school and prevents health and learning needs from escalating.

Pupil, staff, and family voice actively drives tangible improvements in schools and across the Trust.





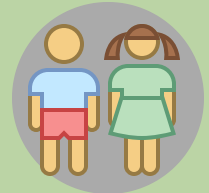
2024/25 at a Glance



3 schools
1 satellite



207 pupils



200 staff



1 Ofsted inspection



6 Trustee Visits

6

18 staff accessing NPQs



2 Leading Parent Partnership Awards



2 Autism Advanced Accreditations



Staff Awards

For Demonstrating our Core Values of Courage,
Determination, and Teamwork

joshua o'brien
daryl johnson
manny jinks zarko zahariev chris bowles
alan johnson sujata banti shauna ashfield
jenny treanor diana edgar
mark fisher ian smith lisabeach
junior hamil daniel brown sword
celeste faragher harriet palmer
vanda kaziuk rebecca carrington
anna belduffill lyn jacques





2024/25 at a Glance - Church Lawton School



10 days

External Curriculum Support



11 days

Access to Fully-funded training



11 days

Safeguarding Support



70 hours

Access to Network Groups



10 days

School Improvement Support



£74,000

Capital investment to enhance the School environment:

- 1:1 Devices
- Internet Upgrade
- Boiler Replacement





2024/25 at a Glance - Thames Valley School



9 days

External Curriculum Support



11 days

Access to Fully-funded training



12 days

Safeguarding Support



70 hours

Access to Network Groups



13 days

School Improvement Support



£136,000

Capital investment to enhance the School environment:

- 1:1 Devices
- Charging Lockers
- Internet Upgrade
- Cladding Replacement
- Flooring Replacement





2024/25 at a Glance - Vanguard School



12 days

External Curriculum Support



11 days

Access to Fully-funded training



28 days

Safeguarding Support



70 hours

Access to Network Groups



125 days

School Improvement Support



£70,000

Capital investment to enhance the School environment:

- 1:1 Devices
- Internet Upgrade
- Roof and Drainage Repairs



2024/25 at a Glance - The Student Executive Team

The Student Executive Team drive improvements across the Trust and make recommendations to enhance the educational experience of all learners.

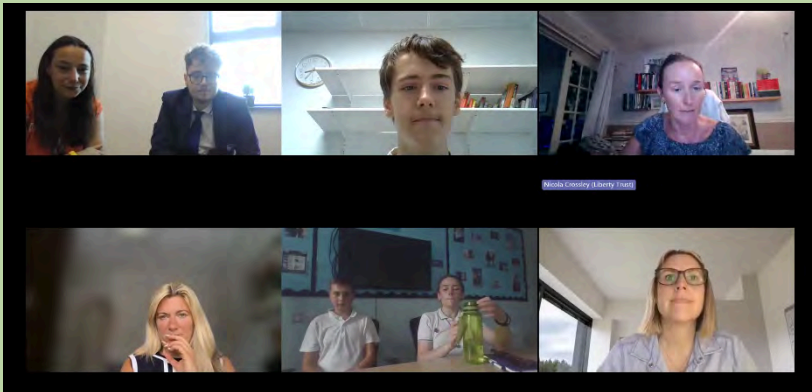
Our Student Executive Team **met 6 times** over the year to discuss:

- The Quality of Education
- The Quality of the School Environment
- Improvements they would like to see

They also met for an **additional extraordinary meeting** to discuss capital expenditure for each school.

The Impact of the Student Executive Team is as Follows:

- Agreed that the focus of capital expenditure on maintenance and repairs was appropriate for this academic year
- Requested that funding be prioritised for the development of staff libraries next year
- Implemented the Eco-Schools programme in each school
- Discussed the findings of the Pupil Survey and recommended a greater focus on positive sleep habits and the negative impact of devices in the bedroom to be reinforced in the curriculum



Delivering an Exceptional Education

The majority of our pupils do not have any prior attainment data; this reflects the national picture due to the COVID years. However, the lack of data for our pupils is further complicated due to a lack of standardised assessments in previous settings or as a result of being out of education prior to joining us.

As a result, we utilise CAT4 assessments to ensure we can appropriately plan for and deliver a curriculum that is accessible for all.

Data illustrates that 71% of our pupils join us **below** age-related expectations. Therefore we work hard to ensure that all learners make exceptional progress from their starting points - and this includes a focus on bridging any gaps that may be evident.

Many of our children have specific interests and we aim to support the development of these interests wherever possible. This might be through the offer of lunch-time clubs or might be through interweaving the pupil's interest into lessons, where appropriate and possible.

Every school ensures that enrichment activities are available on a termly basis, as a minimum; however, there are often more than this.

Recent activities have included theatre trips; visits to the farm; Adventure Learning; contributing to local arts exhibitions; recreating Santa's grotto; visits to the Science Discovery Centre; Legoland; and the Earth Trust.

Pupils are also able to take advantage of 'drop-down days' where the curriculum is collapsed to focus on a full day's activities - recent activities have included a Science Day with exciting opportunities to explore the world of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths).

We were shocked to read from National Literacy Trust data that 1 in 5 children do not own a book of their own. Many of our children are avid readers anyway, but every Christmas since 2022, the Trust has bought every child a book of their choice as a Christmas present.

We do not stipulate what type of book and we encourage personal interests to be reflected in the choices made; In this way we are supporting the development of reading as both precious and something to enjoy.



Source:

Galloway, Jo (2025) *Education and Safeguarding Data Report 2024/25*. Unpublished. (Liberty Academy Trust)

Delivering an Exceptional Careers Education

Liberty's approach to Careers Education is rooted in its Quality-of-Life Framework, aiming to empower pupils with choice, independence, and meaningful engagement in planning their futures.

All schools provide independent careers guidance from Year 7 to Year 13, publish careers programmes online, and follow the Gatsby Benchmarks.

Platforms like Unifrog, Xello, and Kudos support personalised guidance, while partnerships with local businesses and national organisations offer diverse work experiences.

Each school has a named Careers Leader and participates in local Careers Hubs. Training, audits, and quality assurance ensure continuous improvement. The Trust monitors impact through destinations data, showing strong post-16/18 outcomes, and is committed to expanding work experience, supported internships, and SEND-specific careers events.

At **TVS**, the approach to Careers education is tailored, inclusive, and aspirational, with a focus on interconnectedness between school and the world of work. Their work this year has included a strategic review of the whole-schools Career's Programme, ensuring full alignment with the revised Gatsby Benchmarks.

At **CLS**, the approach to Careers education is rooted in the belief that all students should be supported to achieve their aspirations, with a focus on developing determination and resilience to access a range of stretching opportunities. Their work this year has included the introduction of online tools to explore pathways and to increase access to more businesses and workplaces.

At **VGS**, the approach to Careers education is collaborative and enriching, with a focus on creating energy and creativity in exploring life opportunities. Their work this year has included the development of College partnerships and a strong engagement with the Lambeth Schools Careers Network.



For the last two years, the proportion of young people who have NOT been in education, employment or training on leaving a Liberty school, has been 0%.





Progress and Outcomes



Highlights

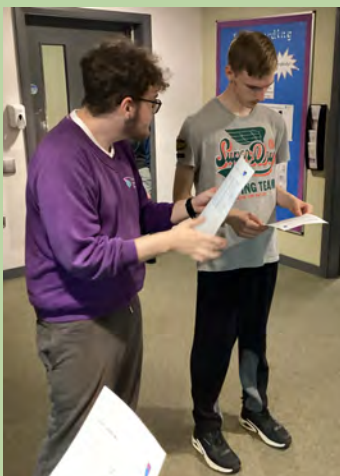


- 100% of pupils achieved at least 1 GCSE - up from 76% in 2024 (national = 97%)
- 96% of pupils achieved a qualification in English and Maths, at an appropriate level - up from 76%
- 89% of pupils achieved 3 or more qualifications at Grade 4 or higher - up from 62%

- 75% of pupils achieved 5 or more qualifications at Grade 4 or higher - up from 34%
- 32% of pupils achieved a Grade 4 or higher in both English and Maths - up from 21%
- 25% of pupils achieved a Grade 5 or higher in both English and Maths - up from 15%

Pupil Success Stories

- At Vanguard School, pupil A achieved: Combined Science (7/6); History (7); Maths (7); English (6); Citizenship (6); Computer Science (6)
- At Thames Valley School, pupil D achieved: Computer Science (5); Combined Science (4/4); Geography (4); Functional Skills English (4); Maths (3)
- At Church Lawton School, pupil H achieved: Combined Science (8/7); English Literature (8); Maths (6); Further Maths (5); Computer Science (6)

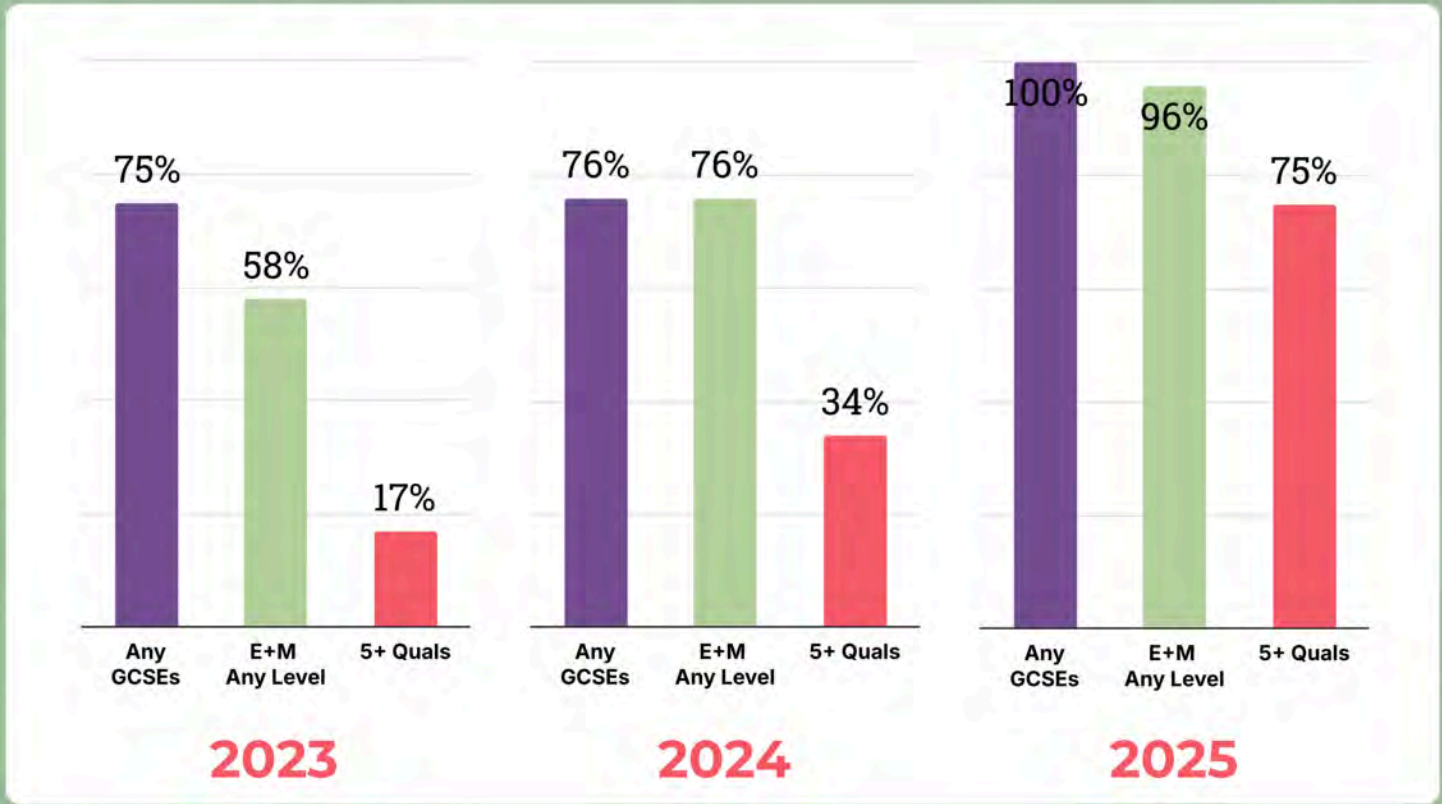


Source:

Galloway, Jo (2025) Education and Safeguarding Data Report 2024/25. Unpublished. (Liberty Academy Trust)

Progress and Outcomes

Liberty Exam Results Over Time



The data shows significant improvement from 2024 and a positive 3-year trajectory. Most notably, the increase in exam entries at GCSE level and in total qualifications achieved illustrates the clear commitment from each school to high aspirations and access to opportunity.

Source: Galloway, Jo (2025) Education and Safeguarding Data Report 2024/25. Unpublished. (Liberty Academy Trust)

What Ofsted Says About LAT Schools



"Pupils are clearly happy at this school. Leaders ensure that the school is calm and orderly. Leaders expect pupils to achieve well. Leaders have devised a curriculum that matches the ambition of the National Curriculum. Teachers provide useful feedback that helps pupils to learn more knowledge.

Pupils are well-prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils receive a comprehensive careers education programme.

The arrangements for Safeguarding are effective."

Church Lawton School, November 2022

"Pupils are happy and motivated in this inclusive school. Pupils benefit from the high expectations that staff have for how well they will achieve. Due to this, pupils work hard and strive to achieve their best, which they do. This is a calm school community where pupils treat each other, and adults in the school, with respect.

The school is highly ambitious for what pupils will achieve. KS4 pathways are extremely well designed and matched to pupils' needs. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Classrooms are focused environments where pupils are enthusiastic to learn. Adults set high expectations for how pupils will behave and pupils consistently meet these.

The arrangements for Safeguarding are effective."

Thames Valley School, April 2024

"Pupils work hard and demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning. The school has high expectations and ambitions for pupils. Pupils have ample opportunities to develop their talents. Pupils describe the school as 'fantastic', and 'safe', reflecting a strong sense of belonging and pride in their community. Their eagerness to speak positively about their experiences demonstrates high levels of investment in the school's culture.

The school has designed an ambitious curriculum that ensures pupils get a breadth of curriculum similar to that in a mainstream school. The school makes sure that the careers guidance programme is embedded throughout the school. This means that nobody loses sight of the importance of preparing pupils for adulthood.

The arrangements for Safeguarding are effective."

Vanguard School, July 2025

What Our Families Say About LAT Schools



"Since he's been at the school, he's been really good, his speech has come on loads, he has friends, the teachers are amazing, the head of centre is excellent we always get called if there is a problem, but the teacher communicates daily.

My child loves the therapy dog as well, I know they are all different levels but the kids relationships are so nice.

The teachers are really nice, we always get messages from his keyworker about his day, we love seeing him improving. The school has done amazing with him and they are so patient.

He loves school!"

"To be honest I am so happy with this school, we have no problem, I can see my son progressing. The staff are very kind and nice with my son and all of us. My son is so happy to be there, he says he has friends.

When he was in his old school no one wanted to play with him and he was so lonely but now he comes home and says he has best friends. When I drop my son off at school now I know he is in a safe place.

Since he joined in September I have seen so much progress from him, he can express himself more, he talks more and he seems happier. I am just so thankful for this school."

"I have two children here and their lives have dramatically changed for the better since moving to that school. I had two school phobic children in mainstream education, one of whom was expressing thoughts of not wanting to be alive and the other who was always sad.

Since starting at the school, because of the environment, understanding and desire to support the children, my children have transformed into happy children who always look forward to going to school. I can't speak highly enough of the staff."

"The staff at this school do an amazing job to meet the needs of each pupil in an holistic way. As such a child here has the chance to develop at their own pace becoming confident, well-rounded, educated young people.

I have been astounded at the development of my child at this school and know it's only down to the hard work of all the staff who endeavour to go above and beyond to support the pupils here"



Research and Development



Having opened in September 2024, our Research School bridges the gap between academia and practice. We currently work with 10 UK universities on projects designed to increase knowledge and understanding of autism, as well as trialling approaches designed to support the learning and experiences of our children and young people now.

Supporting Routes into Teaching

Teaching children with additional needs requires excellent skills of adaptive practice, empathy, and high aspirations. Whilst professional expectation is high, our staff are supported to become exceptional practitioners.

Our achievements in the last year include:

- 2 staff accessing the Assessment Only (AO) route to teaching
- 3 staff accessing the Teaching Apprenticeship
- 1 Early Career Teacher (ECT) joined us to begin their career.

Focusing on Staff Training

We believe our children deserve to be taught and supported by highly qualified staff and so we invest heavily in professional development, with a focus on: Postgraduate qualifications in Autism Leadership and Education; National Professional Qualifications (NPQs); Apprenticeships; and our externally accredited Improving Teaching Programme (ITP).

Our achievements in the last year include:

- 4 staff accessing Digital Apprenticeships
- 18 staff accessing NPQs
- 15 staff accessing the ITP.



Driving Diversity in Education

Our focus on human flourishing, explored later, evidences our commitment to Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (EDIB), so that our workforce now and in the future better represents the communities we serve.

Highlights include: 66% of teacher apprentices identifying as Black, Asian, Other or Mixed ethnic backgrounds; 100% identifying as female; and 33% identifying as disabled.



Research and Development



Our involvement in research and development this year has ensured that Liberty has contributed to national policy and practice.

The CEO has presented at the following Conferences:

- TES expert panel, “How might the new government approach inclusion and the relationship between AP, SEND & Mainstream education” (Nov 2024)
- Forum Strategy Round Table with Baroness Estelle Morris on curriculum reform (Nov 2024)
- BETT/ASCL Round Table, “What leaders are looking for from EduTech and PedTech” (Jan 2025)
- Fusion Regional Annual SEND conference, “Supporting an Inclusive and Ambitious Curriculum for Learners with SEND” (June 2025)

The Director of Education has presented at the following Conferences:

- UCL London International Conference on Inclusive Education (LICIE) 2025 “Starting with the end in mind: developing a curriculum where autistic learners thrive” (July 2025)

The Director of Safeguarding has presented at the following Conferences:

- NAASA Community Day - 'DSL standards - why and what next?' (October 2024)
- University of Warwick, Research In Action conference - 'Strategic research: Developing a competency framework for DSL's' (December 2024)
- NAASA DSL conference - 'Supervision and reflective practice' (March 2025)
- CST Safeguarding Professionals' Community - 'Professionalising the role of the DSL' (Mar 25)

As the SEN representative for the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL), the CEO continues to advocate for better inclusion and agency of all with additional needs, but particularly for the autistic community. This year, the CEO has given evidence in the House of Lords on the following:

- The Impact of the Autism Act and Strategy (May 2025)
- How to Foster Successful Academies (June 2025)

Working alongside our university partners, we are currently involved in the following projects:



A collaborative project with the University of East London to support the development of inclusive policy and practice in Uzbekistan, underpinned by principles of Universal Design for Learning.



A collaborative project with the University of Chichester and the Clem Burke Drumming Project, which applies research identifying the positive impact of drumming on the autistic brain, particularly on concentration and regulation.



A collaborative project with the charity Brain Waves, the University of Oxford and The Day student newspaper offering training and development in positive mental health and wellbeing as a preventative measure.

Supporting Human Flourishing for Pupils

We want our children to flourish under our care; this requires a balance of academic expectations and opportunities for wider curricular activities. We believe an effective balance will support the development of positive citizens of the future.

In the last year, our pupils have had access to the following:

Leading through Accountability and Moral Responsibility



The Student Executive Team (SET) met with the CEO 6 times this year to discuss:

- The quality of education
- The quality of the school environment
- Capital expenditure to improve the school environment
- Adopting the Eco-Schools Programme



Driving Excellence in Education for Autistic Children and Young People



- Enrichment Weeks
- Adventure Learning
- Duke of Edinburgh Awards
- First News and The Day digital newspapers
- Lyfta immersive worlds
- Clem Burke Drumming Project



Supporting Resilience and Wellbeing



- Active School Councils and Student Executive Team (SET)
- Rights Respecting Schools Awards
- EDI Boards in each school
- Pride Week; Neurodiversity Week
- Autism Acceptance Month
- Black History Celebration Month
- Development of more Sensory Spaces
- Careers Fayres
- Support for the Halo Code
- Skin tone plasters
- Occupational Therapist, Speech and Language Therapist and Psychologist on site



Supporting Human Flourishing for Staff

With our people as our most valuable resource, we want them to flourish professionally, so that this impacts positively on their ability to flourish personally. Each school community has different needs and so Principals ensure that the Quality of Life framework (staff) is adapted to offer support and benefits that best meet the needs of their people.

In the last year, our staff have had access to the following:

Leading through Accountability and Moral Responsibility



- Commitment to the Mental Health at Work Standards
- EDI Partnership Board drives initiatives across the Trust
- CEO Drop-In Sessions at each School Visit
- Real Living Wage Employer
- Level 3 Disability Leader Status (highest award available)

Driving Excellence in Education

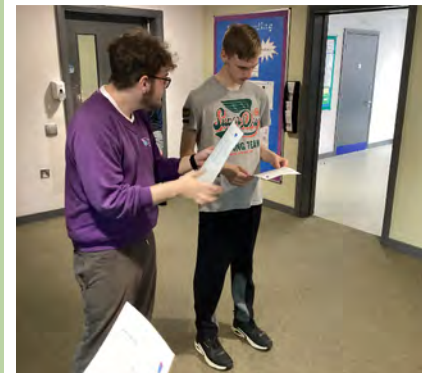


- Fully funded training, including Postgraduate qualifications, Apprenticeships, and National Professional Qualifications (NPQs)
- LAT Improving Teaching Programme externally accredited
- Full suite of Network opportunities for professional development and peer support (examples include: Admin Network; Operations Network; SENCO Network)

Supporting Resilience and Wellbeing



- Termly Staff Awards with £200 Voucher and Certificate
- EDI Ambassadors in every school
- Flexible Working Employer
- Duvet Days
- PPA from Home
- Employee Assistance Programme
- Retail Benefits
- Coaching for all Principals as standard
- Supervision for all DSLs as standard





Liberty Timeline

2022 - 2025



2022

- Liberty Academy Trust formed
- LAT website and branding designed and launched



2023



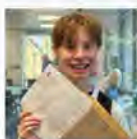
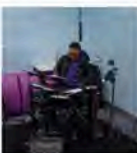
- LAT Centralised systems established
- External review of Safeguarding endorses positive approach
- LAT launches Staff recognition scheme
- Video SEN Reports launched in each school
- First CEO Roadshow
- LAT EDI Strategy launched and EDI Ambassadors identified in each school
- LAT signs Menopause Workplace Pledge
- LAT signs Mental Health at Work Commitment
- LAT adopts the Halo Code
- LAT Fully-funded PGCERT launches
- External Review of Governance endorses effectiveness

2024



- TVS Ofsted - Good
- Significant Change for TVS Satellite approved
- LAT adopts Real Living Wage
- CLS achieves Leading Parent Partnership Award
- Liberty Research School established
- Hill Brow (TVS) Satellite opens
- CLS achieves Music Mark
- TVS achieves Leading Parent Partnership Award
- LAT achieves Level 3 Disability Confident Leader Award

2025



- CLS achieves NAS Advanced Autism Accreditation
- CLS awarded Lead Special School in Music for CE
- TVS achieves NAS Advanced Autism Accreditation
- LAT training programme ITP externally accredited
- CLS achieves Bronze Rights Respecting School
- LAT achieves Cyber Essentials Certification
- CLS achieves Microsoft Innovative Education Expert status
- VGS Ofsted - Good
- 100% of pupils achieve 1+ GCSEs
- 96% of pupils achieve qualifications in En / Ma





Our Team



Our Members



Margaret Mulholland



Professor Des Hewitt



Simon Tanner



Charlotte Jordan

Our Trustees



Chair of Trustees
David Tucker
BA (Hons) Dip Arch (Cantab) ARB RIBA



Vice Chair of Trustees
Phil Harrison



Chair of Finance, Audit & Risk
Anita Etheridge



Trustee
Sharan Matharu



Attendance Link Trustee
Sarah Milne



Trustee
Craig Richards



Trustee
James Shafe



Trustee
Emma Nazurally

Our Executive Team



Chief Executive Officer
Dr Nic Crossley
MA, MEd, NPQH, FCIEA



Chief Financial Officer
Lynn Hadfield



Director of Governance
Chris Rossiter



Director of Education
Jo Galloway



Director of Safeguarding
Nic Law



Head of Executive Services & EA to CEO
Harriet Mughal



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