



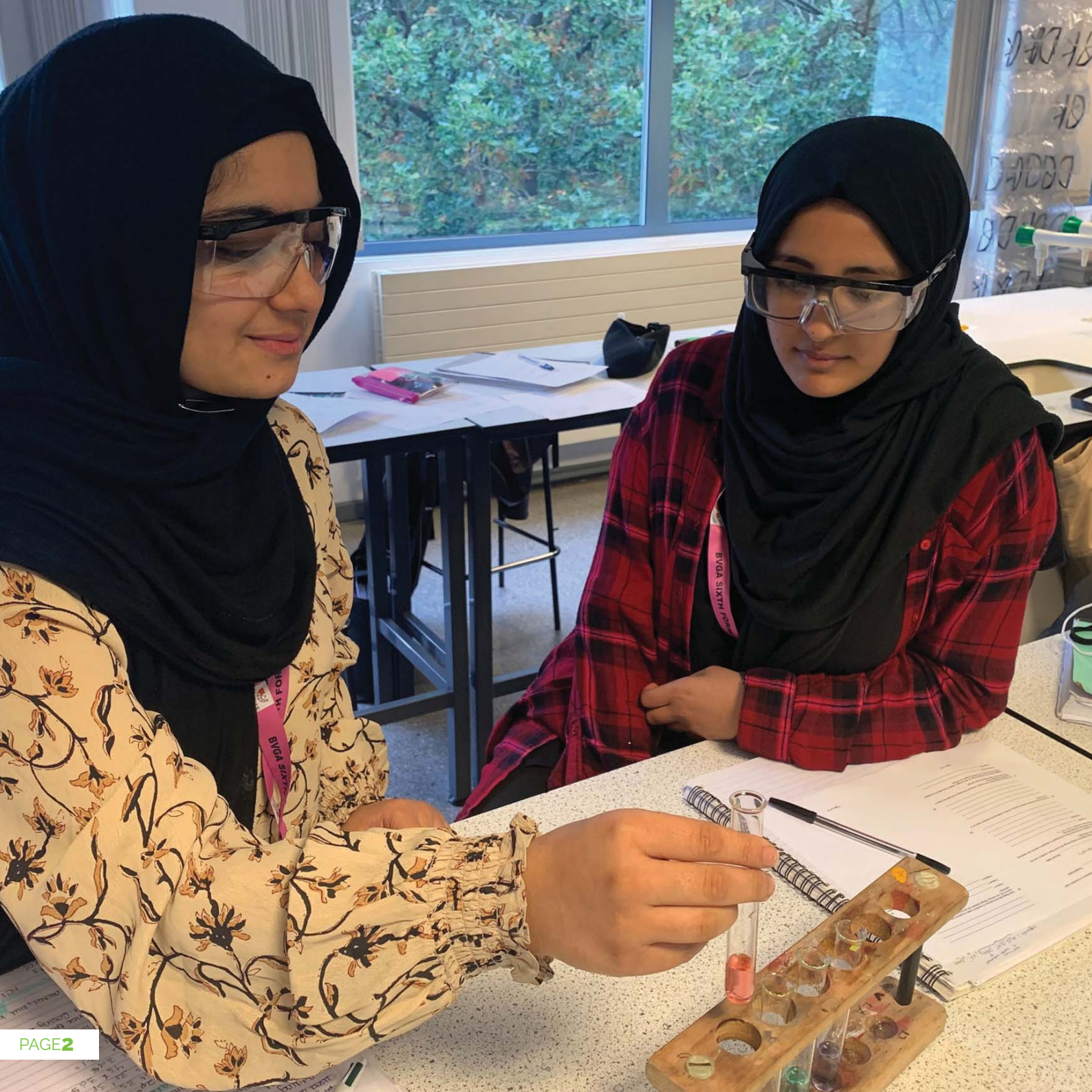
**Bradford Diocesan  
Academies Trust**

A photograph of six children of diverse backgrounds sitting on a red wooden slide in a grassy field. From bottom to top: a girl with pigtails in a teal sweater, a boy in a green sweater, a boy in a purple sweater, a girl in a dark blue sweater, a boy in a red sweater and glasses, and a girl in a red sweater. In the background, there are trees and a stone structure.

**ONE TRUST,  
ONE FAMILY,  
WHERE EVERY CHILD BELONGS**

**Strategic Plan 2022-25**





# Foreword from our Chair of Trustees



It is my privilege, as Chair of BDAT, to write this foreword to our BDAT Strategic Plan 2022-2025, which restates our vision and purpose, and explains our intentions and strategy for the near future. Alongside my fellow Trustees, I am extremely proud of the achievements of our diocesan educational Trust, of the genuine dedication of our leaders and staff teams and of the growing and extremely positive reputation of BDAT, which reflects our commitment to the children and the families which we serve, across the city of Bradford.

Since 2020, the Trust has weathered and responded to the unprecedented effects of the Covid-19 Pandemic; but despite these challenges we believe we have grown stronger together and realise how our inter-dependency and collective spirit are assets. Throughout the last two years, adherence to our core values have helped us all to consider where we can have most impact in our schools and provided guidance for our actions. To this end, our strategy emphasises highly inclusive practice, unique pathways to school improvement within each academy, and to sustaining 'BDAT people-focused' activity and career development.

As a recognised highly effective, supportive and successful Trust, I am proud BDAT continues to grow and expand its influence within Bradford and beyond into our Yorkshire region. I am certain the Trust will sustain its values-led approach, continue to operate to standards of excellence and maintain deep understanding and insight as we look to the next phase of our future.

*Tessa Mason*

**Tessa Mason FCCT**  
Chair of Trustees, Bradford Diocesan Academies Trust

 Because  
we can't  
have great  
schools  
without  
great staff

**(BDAT People)**



# Welcome from our CEO



As we celebrate our tenth year of operations at Bradford Diocesan Academies Trust, it is a privilege to be able to present our new strategic vision for the next stage of the BDAT journey.

The last three years have been unexpected and challenging for the education sector and to the lives of the children, young people and communities we serve. Back in 2019, when BDAT set out our previous strategic plan **"From Growth to Great"**, we expected to enter into a period of consolidation, stabilisation and reflection on the back of considerable early growth. Our focus was on road testing

and quality assuring our education approach and operational structures to ensure that we were robust and truly adding value to each of our family of schools.

Traversing the COVID pandemic certainly tested those processes and on the eve of our tenth birthday we emerge stronger, more connected as a family of schools and more secure in the knowledge that as a Trust we are well equipped to ensure the very best life chances for each and every child in our schools.

Our new strategic plan for 2022-25 **"One Trust, One Family, Where Every Child Belongs"** builds on the experience, agile practice and hard work which took place across the Trust and our schools, which has set us in good stead to look to our future.

As we look to the future as a mature Academy Trust, we remain focused unapologetically on school improvement and improving education standards as our key raison d'être. We are primarily an educational charity and driving children's outcomes and opportunities remain at the heart of all we do. However, as a large and growing organisation we also recognise our staff as our greatest asset; hence the launch of "BDAT People", our employee development offer in 2021. Looking to the future we will continue to focus on those areas which ensure we add value to both our staff and students including wellbeing, inclusion and of course ensuring student voice directs our thinking.

I hope our new strategy gives you a feel for who we are at BDAT and what we represent. We hope you enjoy finding out more about us.

A stylized, handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Carol Dewhurst'.

**Carol Dewhurst, OBE**  
Chief Executive Officer



\* Because  
we are  
not all  
the same,  
but we  
all want  
the same  
chances

(Bradford  
Student Voice)







 Our schools  
are not just  
part of BDAT,  
they are BDAT

# A bit about us...

BDAT is an established multi-academy Trust working in Bradford, West Yorkshire. As we celebrate ten years of operation, here are ten things you might like to know:

- 1** We are the BDAT family.
- 2** We focus on truly knowing our schools and only undertaking careful growth.
- 3** We are a values-led Trust.
- 4** We are passionate about ensuring the highest quality education for our students and developing the whole child to give them the skills to succeed.
- 5** We highly value diversity and inclusion, proactively promoting these vital issues across our schools and Trust.
- 6** We take an expert, informed and holistic approach to school improvement.
- 7** Our Trust ensures the best added value for our schools and students.
- 8** We have a strong senior leadership team to support our schools.
- 9** We value our people and are constantly creating and developing new ways to support them.
- 10** We value and enjoy working with a range of school partners to build and share knowledge.

## **1 We are the BDAT family.**

We are a group of distinct and different sibling schools that work together as part of a strong family. Each of us is different but we all work towards the same endpoint, focussed relentlessly on providing high quality education and life experiences for our students because we believe that every child only has one chance at a good education.

Our schools are not just part of BDAT, they are BDAT.

## **2 We focus on truly knowing our schools and only undertaking careful growth.**

We are a multi-academy Trust made up of 14 Primary Schools, 4 Secondary Schools and 1 All Through School. The Trust supports more than 10,500 children and 1,543 staff.

By taking this approach, we have successfully built our Trust gradually from three schools to 19 over the last ten years.

## **3 We are a values-led Trust.**

Our Trust values are Inclusion, Compassion, Aspiration, Resilience and Excellence (ICARE) and these are at the core of all we do across the Trust for our students, colleagues and communities. We believe our students must always be at the heart of our thinking and decision making.

Whilst as a Diocesan Trust our values are grounded in Christian values, we are proud to recognise our values are fully inclusive, equally accessible and applicable to all faiths and none. It is for this reason we are equally proud to support non-church schools as well as church schools, providing a strong values-led education for children across the City of Bradford.

## **4 We are passionate about ensuring the highest quality education for our students and developing the whole child to give them the skills to succeed.**

We believe each of our students are entitled to an excellent high-quality education experience. We have a series of networks amongst teachers and subject specialists as well as a robust CPD programme to ensure our teachers and support staff remain at the forefront of fantastic education practice.

We also want our students' and staff's time in our schools to be full of exciting and diverse cultural and life experiences, so they fulfil their wider potential. Our schools offer a range of clubs, societies, trips and events to ensure students can explore their passions, discover new talents and build life skills to support them in the world after education.





## 5 We highly value diversity and inclusion, proactively promoting these vital issues across our schools and Trust.

Inclusion is a very important value to BDAT. We recognise Bradford is one of the youngest and most diverse cities in the UK and want our Trust to model and reflect this. To us, inclusion is about understanding that everyone is equal, without exception, valuing and encouraging diversity and difference and proactively seeking to learn from others.

During the pandemic, our students told us that while "we are not all the same, we all want the same chances".

We are proud of our BDAT inclusion strategy. It is about ensuring inclusion and equality across our staff recruitment process; revising our school curriculum to ensure it is relevant, topical and inclusive for all our children; embedding a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination and bias and spending time listening to our students, families and communities to understand what inclusion means to them and what we can do differently to ensure we are inclusive and accessible to all.





## **6 We take an expert, informed and holistic approach to school improvement.**

As a Trust, our school improvement approach is about schools supporting schools, grounded in evidence-based improvement and sharing good local and national practice.

We recognise school improvement is not one-size-fits-all and needs to be tailored to our schools' individual context and communities. As a Trust we support each school through bespoke school improvement customised to its context and needs, framed through a unified Trust-wide intent and ambition to drive up standards. We have a rigorous quality assurance process to ensure impact and improved outcomes.

## **7 Our Trust ensures the best added value for our schools and students.**

We believe everything we do and focus on should add value to our schools and ultimately to our students. That is what we are here for.

Whether it is about improving teaching and learning by facilitating the spread of excellent practice through high-quality CPD; or by reducing the workload burden on schools by removing the administrative burden of policy and risk assessment; or by ensuring our schools are robust, safe, secure and well-managed through robust compliance and governance support.



## **8 We have a strong senior leadership team to support our schools.**

Our team of senior leaders are experts in their field, working with our school leaders and colleagues to support, advise and enhance practice to ensure the best possible education for our students.

With previous careers in government, policy development and school and Trust leadership, as well as finance and HR, our Trust's senior team is able to lead the Trust effectively and share knowledge, insight and experience with our colleagues to ensure the successful running of our schools for our students.

## **9 We value our people and are constantly creating and developing new ways to support them.**

We drive school improvement by recruiting, developing and retaining highly skilled, expert and confident staff to deliver high-quality education so every child can fulfil their potential and goals.

We strongly believe that we can't have great schools without great staff. We have developed our BDAT People strategy to ensure we do everything we can to recruit, develop and retain our talented staff.

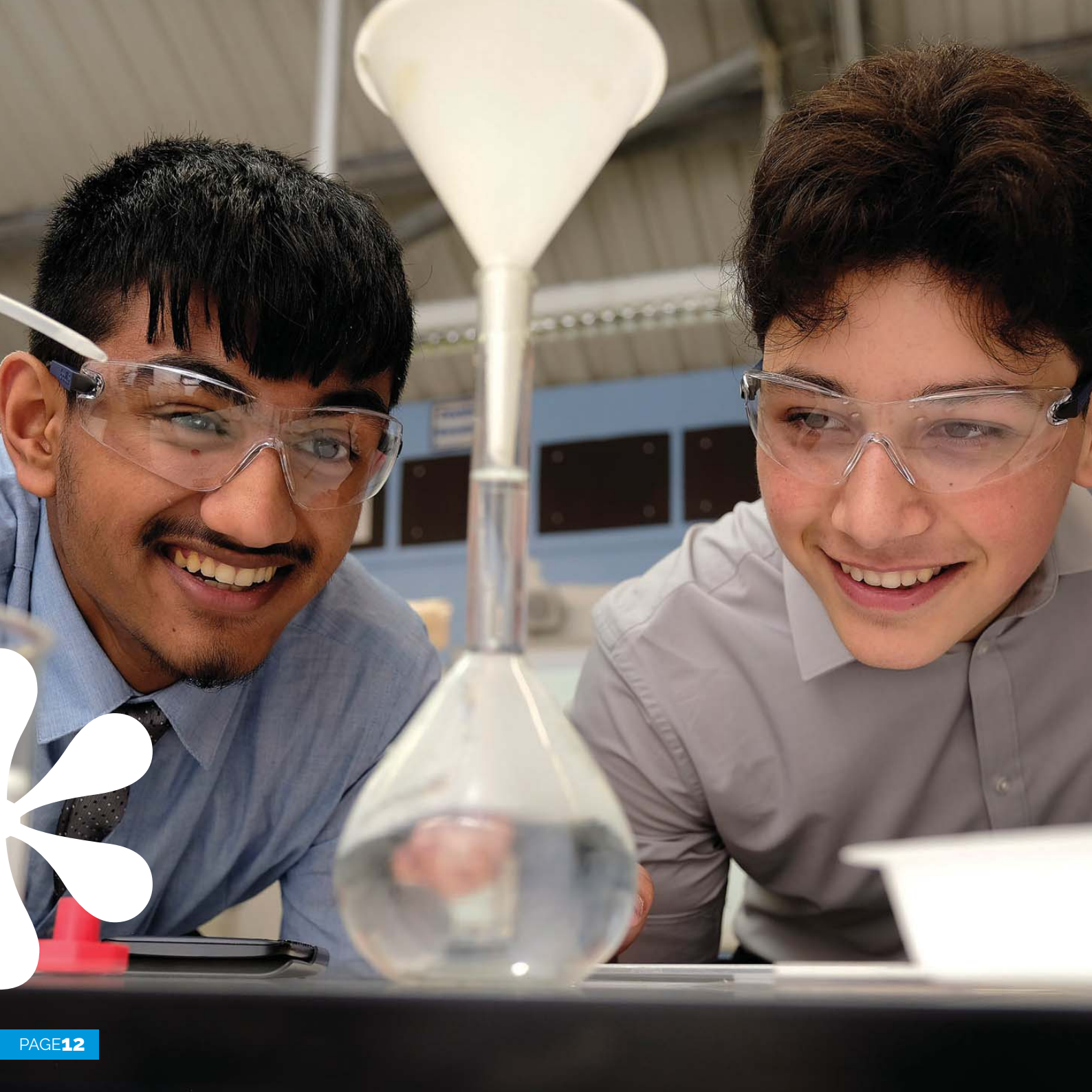
BDAT People provides the strategic direction to ensure our professional and career development offer supports school improvement and drives our vision of BDAT as an employer of choice. Our people matter to us, and we have developed pathways, training, networks and support to ensure our staff reach their potential so our children can reach theirs.

## **10 We value and enjoy working with a range of school partners to build and share knowledge.**

We value and enjoy working collaboratively with a range of school partners both locally and nationally. We believe working across and within the system can only build our professional knowledge as an organisation.

As an established Trust, we believe it is important to support other schools and Trusts whenever we can, as by working together, we are all stronger. We have helped to set up and support several Trusts across the Yorkshire area.







# BDAT in numbers (August 2023)

**10,692** children in the Trust

**1,543** staff

**19** schools

**£77m** annual budget

**14** primary schools

**4** secondary schools

**1** all through school

**4,895** primary students  
(including 419 nursery children)

**1,291** primary free school meals

**5,797** secondary students  
(including 397 sixth form students)

**2,178** secondary free school meals

# Our approach

As a Trust everything we do is about supporting our children and young people. Our students remain at the heart of every decision we make as every child only gets one chance at a good education. Everything we prioritise and do must improve outcomes and life chances for our young people – after all they will be the leaders of tomorrow and shape the world we live in.



Children  
are a gift from  
the Lord; they  
are a reward  
from him

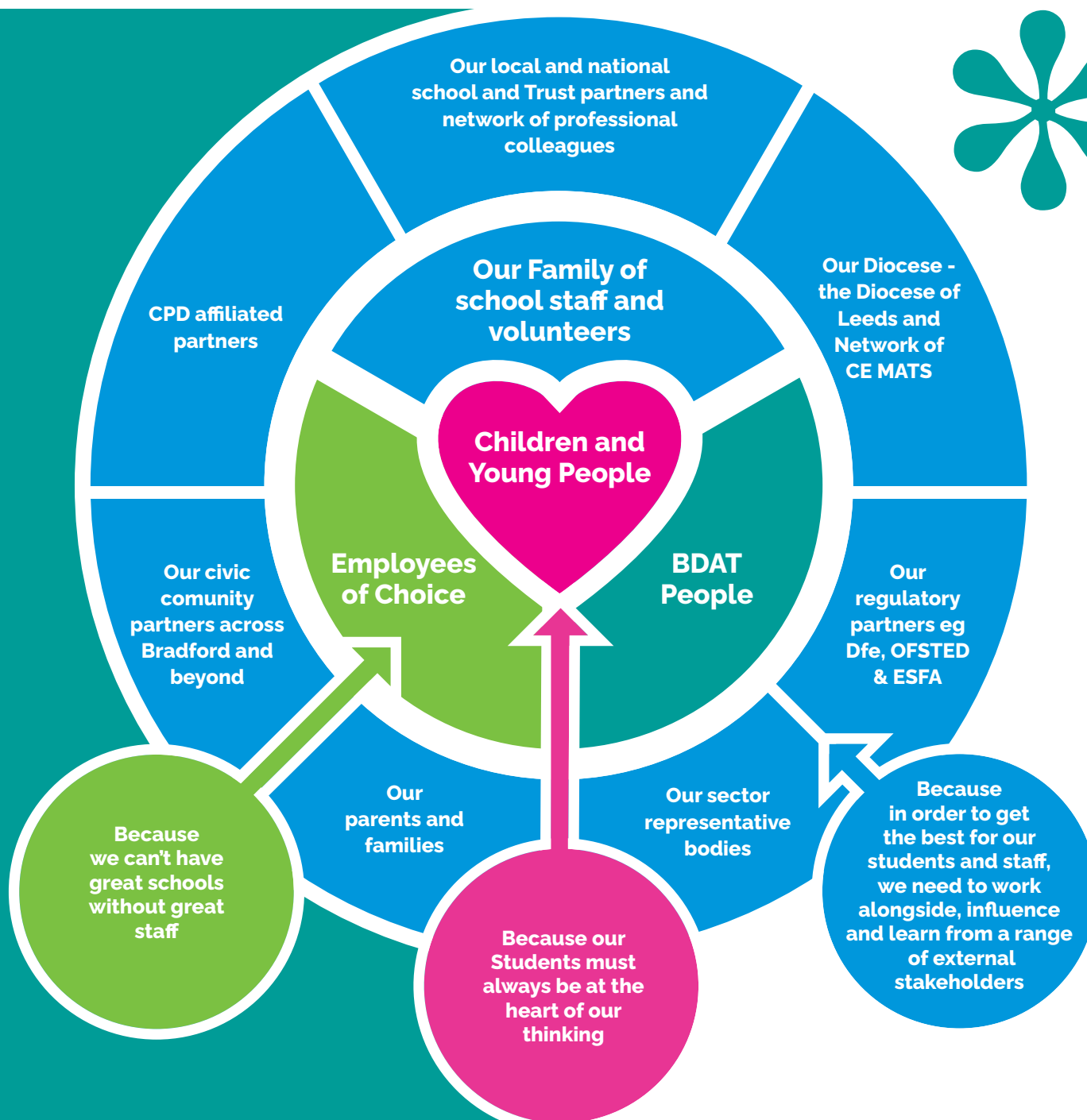
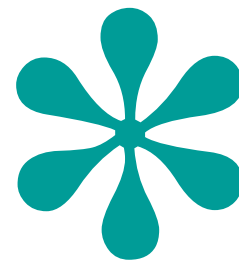
**Psalm 127:3**


To support this ambition we need a skilled, effective and fulfilled workforce. Our staff are our biggest asset and we want to recruit and retain the highest calibre staff and develop them to be the best they can be. Our teachers and school staff are some of the key adults our students look up to and we want them to enjoy and excel during their time working with the Trust.

We understand that to be successful we need to routinely deliver excellent teaching day in and day out in our classrooms. We are committed to making sure our staff have access to the very latest research, training and digital technologies to ensure that they can be cutting edge in their teaching. Good teaching gives our children the best chance to secure great outcomes.

Finally, we are very aware as a Trust if we only look inwards we will only be as good as our best school and we want to continue to develop and drive Trust practice. We are therefore proud to work with and learn from a huge range of partners. We are also very clear that if we want to ensure our children and our staff get the very best from their time with BDAT we need to have a voice on the local and national stage to help shape and inform local and national policy and practice. We are pleased to work with a number of schools outside BDAT, partner Trusts, the Diocese, policy makers and many more to influence the work of the current and future education landscape. Through effective and non-competitive collaboration the system can continually improve and evolve.





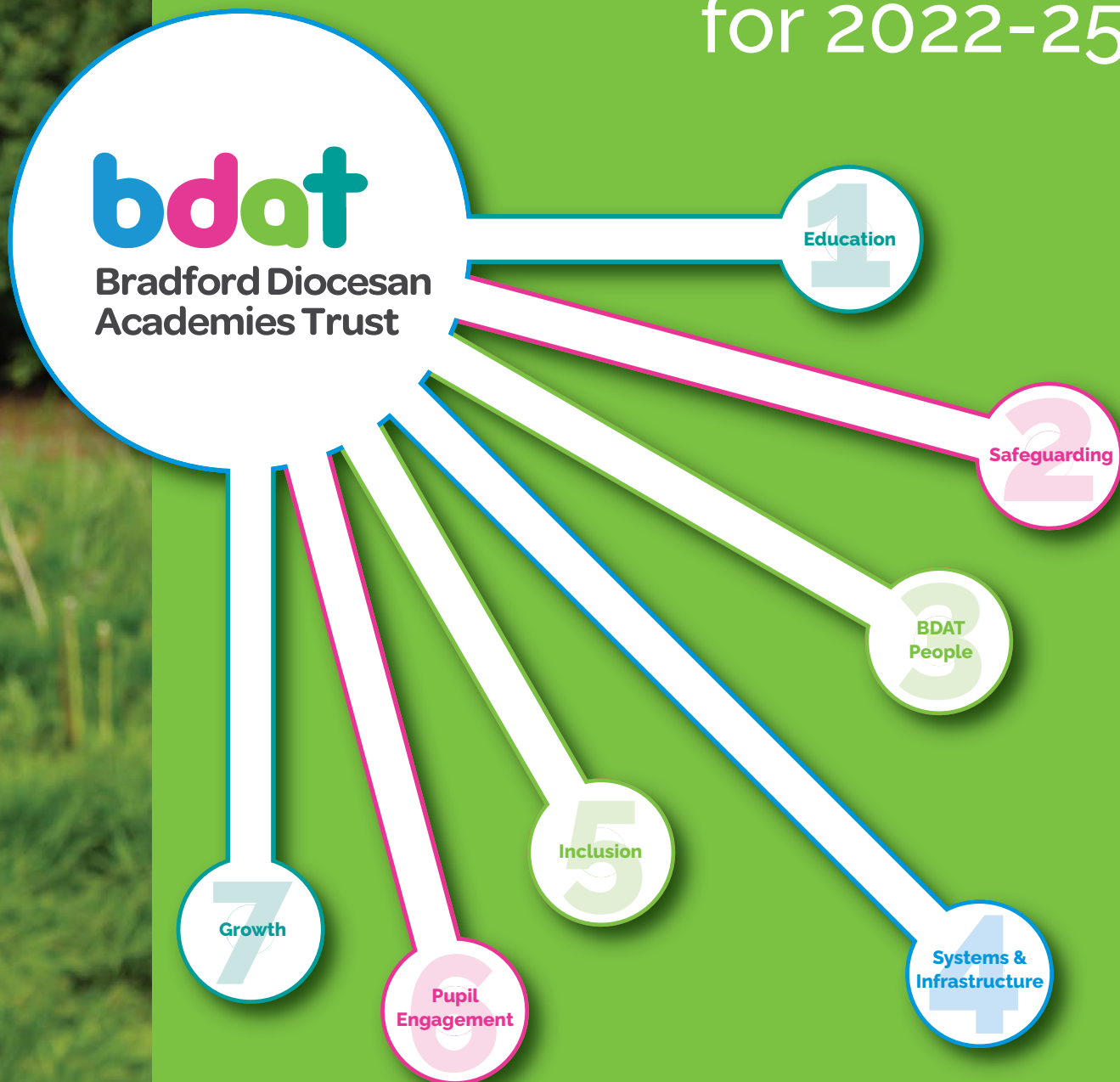
 Because  
we believe  
that every  
child only  
has one  
chance at  
a good  
education

(BDAT Vision)





# Our strategic priorities for 2022-25



# 1 Education

**We will focus relentlessly on driving and redefining our school improvement and teaching practices to ensure improved outcomes for pupils.**

**We will do this by:**

- \* Further improving the Quality of Teaching and therefore outcomes.
- \* Re-evaluating our curriculum intent to ensure it has maximum impact for students and ensure rigorous and robust implementation and quality assurance.
- \* Using the very best evidence-based research and technology to improve practice, including the opportunities within our new digital platform.
- \* Sharing best practice and challenging the status quo in how we teach and operate by working as a family of professionals across school sites.
- \* Ensuring students have access to a wide range of extra-curricular and cultural capital opportunities to develop their thinking and aspirations.
- \* Continuing to focus on narrowing the gap for our less advantaged students.
- \* Ensuring our lower attaining pupils, vulnerable students or students with additional needs, including SEND get a broad, balanced and quality curriculum and learning experience, equivalent to their peers.
- \* Rigorously challenging poor attendance and behaviour's for learning.
- \* Working with every child to ensure that when they leave a BDAT Academy they are ready for the next stage of the education journey and career, be it through further study, employment or apprenticeship.





# 2 Safeguarding

We will ensure safeguarding remains our highest priority so our students are happy, healthy, safe and ready to learn. We will manage this by ensuring safeguarding sits at the very heart of our Trust family and informs everything we do.

We will do this by:

- \* Reviewing our Trust wide safeguarding staffing, processes and policies to ensure that all our staff are well trained and supported to look after the children in our care. We will ensure all staff are aware of the latest safeguarding policy and good practice and know how to raise concerns.
- \* Ensuring that strong quality assurance and audit checks are in place so that every school can be quietly confident safeguarding practice remains compliant and well managed.
- \* Rigorously reporting, monitoring and responding to behaviour or safeguarding incidents in schools, ensuring children feel safe and confident to report any concerns.
- \* Ensuring that all our students including our vulnerable students, pupil premium students and students with SEND are supported and looked after and kept safe to meet their individual and bespoke needs.
- \* Establishing cross Trust networks for staff dealing with safeguarding incidents so that they are supported and can learn from each other.



# 3 BDAT People

We will provide exciting opportunities for our staff to be the best they can be through cutting edge CPD and by caring for their wellbeing.

We will do this by:

- \* Improving our inclusive recruitment offer to attract and appoint high calibre staff including those new to teaching and education.
- \* Providing appropriate development and succession opportunities for all staff from early careers teachers to executive heads, from catering staff to business managers.
- \* Gathering qualitative feedback from staff on how we can improve our workforce offer including speaking to staff who choose to leave BDAT.
- \* Ensuring wellbeing, workload and development opportunities sit hand in hand – happy staff makes happy schools.
- \* Ensuring performance management is embedded across the whole Trust workforce. We will continue to pilot the annual career discussion.
- \* Continuing to select our professional CPD partners carefully ensuring that the offer for staff is bespoke to the BDAT culture and ethos.







# 4 Systems & Infrastructure

**We will develop and refine our business, finance and governance structures to make sure they add value to our schools and reduce bureaucracy, administration and workload.**

**We will do this by:**

- \* Reviewing our Trust central structure and services to ensure they provide good value and great support for our academies as we grow.
- \* Ensuring value for money savings and efficiencies are realised across the Trust through driving effective procurement and identifying areas of saving and waste.
- \* Ensuring our school-based operations and finance staff are well trained to be effective in their role.
- \* Ensuring all our schools and the Trust retain a balanced three-year budget tailored to the needs of their academy.
- \* Investing, monitoring and further developing our Trust wide Digital strategy to ensure that ICT supports and drives our teaching pedagogy and our effective business and operations.
- \* Implementing the recommendations of the BDAT governance review (2022) and continuing to support and scrutinise governance to ensure it remains best practice.
- \* Continuing to ensure our school estate remains safe, secure and compliant. A happy and well-maintained school environment drives good learning, and our students deserve the best we can afford.

# 5 Inclusion

We will make sure that the BDAT value of inclusion is at the forefront of all we do. We will seek to be inclusive by valuing and encouraging diversity and difference and proactively seeking to learn from others.

We will do this, building on our inclusion strategy 2021-22, by:

- \* Looking at our workforce profile, recruitment and retention and development opportunities to ensure they are open and accessible to all staff.
- \* Revising our school curriculum to ensure it is relevant, topical and inclusive for all our children – it is important that our children see themselves in their school leaders and in the subjects that they are taught.
- \* Embedding a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination and bias.
- \* Reviewing our Trust policies and processes to ensure they are cutting edge, fair and equitable for all.
- \* Spending time listening to our students, families and communities to understand what inclusion means to them and what we can do differently to ensure we are inclusive and accessible to all.







# 6 Pupil Engagement

We will work hard to ensure student voice informs our Trust direction and development. We are here to provide a better future for our students. We will make sure their voice matters!

We will do this by:

- \* Ensuring all our academies provide exciting extra-curricular opportunities and trips for our children so they understand what the world can offer and inspires them.
- \* Ensuring that all our pupils, including our most vulnerable, disadvantaged, those with additional needs and those who speak English as an additional language have equal opportunities to have their voice heard.
- \* Continuing to develop systematic Trust wide and school level opportunities for students to voice their opinions and be heard.
- \* Ensuring our students have access to adult leaders to enable their voice to reach and influence local and national policy.
- \* Developing cross Trust activities and events which allow students to work with pupils from across different schools, communities and education phases.

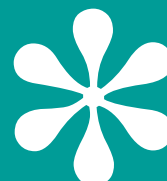
# 7 Growth

We will seek opportunities for slow and well managed growth – but only at the pace which works for our existing schools and those schools who want to become our future family.

Growth is not a strategy or a driver to our success or impact as a Trust. However, during the pandemic, the collaborative ability of a Trust to support and reduce workload across a family of schools was very evident. As a mature and established Trust, committed to making a difference to the lives of children across Bradford, the BDAT Board of Trustees have recognised that we have both the capacity and capability to support schools beyond the current BDAT family. We are therefore looking at managed growth over the next three-year period and seeking to welcome new schools to our family who share our ethos and vision.

We will do this by:

- \* Inviting formal and informal conversations with maintained schools and small Trusts interested in being part of the BDAT family.
- \* Continually reviewing our Trust central service offer and staff capacity to ensure we can support further growth.
- \* Liaising with the Department for Education and Diocese of Leeds to identify and support struggling or vulnerable schools.
- \* Actively reviewing our growth plans at least annually as a Board of Trustees to ensure growth is planned and manageable, and pausing growth at the very first indication of over-stretch to the detriment of our existing family of schools.







# How will we measure our impact?

BDAT is a Trust which prides itself on having high impact by providing a good quality education for our pupils, improving outcomes and being an employer of choice.

We have historically achieved this by delivering sustained education outcomes, quality first teaching and learning and recruiting and retaining high performing staff. We have evidenced this by measuring attendance; progress and attainment outcomes; improved OFSTED and SIAMS inspections, by narrowing the disadvantage gap; by analysing recruitment and retention data and by considering staff satisfaction.

During the COVID pandemic, we faced the challenge of how we could demonstrate impact when most of our traditional success measures were, at best, now heavily skewed or, at worst, completely meaningless as comparators during the pandemic. We had no OFSTED, no published data and attendance was out the window.

As a result, we launched **"Pure Accountability 2020"** which set out a new range of impact measures which the Trust Board could use to measure our success in 2020-2021 and as we looked to the future. It looked at softer measures such as employee and student satisfaction and safeguarding support, as well as alternative hard measures such as student destination data.

In September 2021 we relaunched **"Reconnecting Pure Accountability"** after the first waves of the virus and when schools were "getting back to normal" (or so we thought) to bring together a wider framework to measure impact as we learn to live alongside the pandemic and to reflect on what we want to keep as success measures for our schools.

This bespoke BDAT accountability framework recognises that while the old traditional education accountability measures (OFSTED, exam results etc.) most definitely matter, the wider new measures importantly show our broader impact on the lives of our individual students and staff.

"Reconnecting Pure Accountability" harnesses the best of pre-, during- and post-pandemic success measures in a living and evolving accountability framework designed to deliver meaningful benefits for our students and staff.

**Thank you for reading our BDAT Strategy 2022-25;**

**"One Trust, One Family, Where Every Child Belongs"**







**Bradford Diocesan  
Academies Trust**

**Strategic Plan 2022-25**

**Bradford Diocesan  
Academies Trust**

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