

MAT SI CAPACITY FRAMEWORK

A tool to help MATs understand their capacity to support school improvement

Development of the framework

The framework has been developed in partnership with MAT leaders in the South West region and the Regional Schools Commissioner for the South West, with support from Isos Partnership and Robert Hill. The framework is owned by the South West MAT Development Strategy Group. It has been used over the course of the 2018-19 academic year by South West MAT leaders using an action research approach. Further changes have been made to the framework for the 2019-20 academic year based on feedback from South West MAT leaders and following discussions with the South West MAT Development Strategy Group.



Robert Hill Consulting



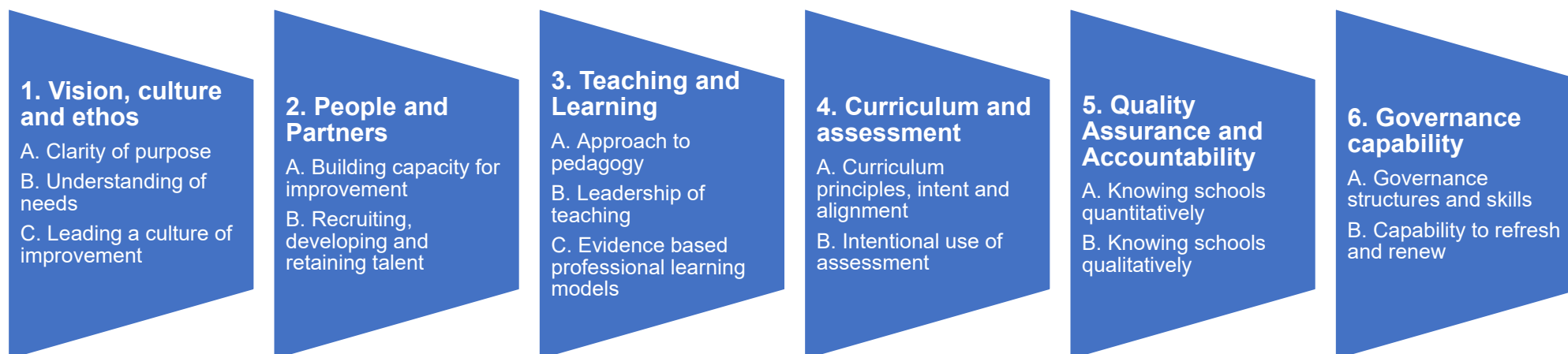
**SW MAT
CEO Network**

MAT IMPROVEMENT CAPACITY FRAMEWORK

This tool has been designed to help Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) understand their current capacity to *support and drive* school improvement – so that they can build and strengthen their current capacity and potentially to grow their capacity to support more schools.

It uses a framework which breaks down MAT improvement capacity into 14 elements, under six main headings. These are based on research about what works in MATs and similar networks of schools internationally. The framework does not assume that there is one best way to support and drive school improvement as a MAT; instead, it isolates the questions, issues and practices that should help enable all kinds of MAT to become more effective in supporting their schools to improve.

The MAT improvement capacity framework:



How to use this tool

For each of the 14 elements of improvement capacity, the rubric includes guiding questions to consider, as well as descriptors of what strong and weak improvement capacity would look like in a MAT. Use the questions and descriptors to rate your MAT against each element along a four-point scale:

Red (weak capacity) **Amber Red** **Amber Green** **Green (strong capacity)**

Descriptors have deliberately not been provided for the 'Amber Red' and 'Amber Green' ratings. If you think that your MAT matches neither the 'Red' nor the 'Green' descriptor, think about which end of the scale it is closer to, and choose the appropriate rating. The right-hand column of the rubric has space for you to mark your rating and make some brief notes about your rationale for choosing that rating.

Remember: this tool is diagnostic, not evaluative or judgemental. The aim is to identify your MAT's most significant areas of strength and challenge, so that you can build your capacity for improvement. A 'Green' rating does not mean that an element is currently perfect, just that it is an area of strength upon which to build. Likewise, a 'Red' rating does not imply failure or underperformance, it simply highlights an area where capacity building should be a priority. Please see Annex A for a guide on How to use the MAT School Improvement Capacity Framework.

Element	Questions to consider	Red (weak) looks like...	Green (strong) looks like...	Current rating and key evidence
1. Vision, culture and ethos				
<p>1A. Clarity of purpose</p> <p>Vision for the MAT Link to strategy Roles and responsibilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Does the MAT have a clear vision of what excellent education looks like in practice? ii. Does the MAT know how it will improve the schools in its trust to deliver its shared vision for excellent education? iii. Can the MAT articulate and explain how its strategy for improvement connects to its vision for excellent education? iv. Has the MAT clearly articulated the distinctive roles of the MAT, clusters and individual schools in driving continued school improvement? v. Do directors, trustees and staff share the vision and approach, and does it inform and drive decision making at all levels across the MAT? vi. Has the vision been widely communicated within and beyond the MAT? Does it drive decision making at all levels across the MAT? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The MAT has not yet fully developed and refined its vision for the quality of education such that it is insufficiently precise ii. School improvement initiatives are often reactive and/or incoherent and consequently have limited systematic impact iii. There is no shared language of improvement across the MAT and schools can't see how the improvement strategy connects to the overall vision for education iv. There is limited clarity across the MAT about the roles of key players in driving school improvement v. Staff and leaders in schools are largely unaware of the vision; key decisions are reactive and ad-hoc, or mainly viewed through the lens of an individual school. vi. The vision hasn't been communicated to schools within the MAT or the wider community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The MAT has a clear and compelling vision for the quality of education it expects to deliver in all of its schools ii. There is a clear and shared articulation of <i>how</i> schools across the MAT will be supported to improve, and this is followed systematically across the MAT iii. The MAT is able to exemplify how its vision for educational excellence can be achieved through an aligned language and practical examples which form the basis of MAT wide expectations iv. The distinctive roles of all those responsible for driving school improvement have been clearly defined, and are kept under review v. Everybody in the MAT is aligned around the educational vision and can describe what it looks like in practice. Fidelity to the vision drives all key decisions across the MAT and within individual schools. vi. The MAT vision has been widely communicated and shared internally and externally with key stakeholders. 	<p>R AR AG G</p>

Element	Questions to consider	Red (weak) looks like...	Green (strong) looks like...	Current rating and key evidence
<p>1B. Understanding of needs</p> <p>Pupil/School Needs Link to MAT priorities Approach to school improvement for different schools</p>	<p>i. Does the MAT have a clear understanding of the full spectrum of needs of pupils in its schools (i.e. SEND, pupil premium, low and high prior attainment and EAL pupils)?</p> <p>ii. Does this understanding of needs and performance link to priorities for improvement across the MAT as a whole?</p> <p>iii. Is the MAT's understanding of the improvement priorities of different schools within the MAT informed by a strong understanding of the data and evidence?</p> <p>iv. Does the MAT know how to differentiate its approach to school improvement from its weakest to its strongest schools?</p> <p>v. Does the MAT have clear systems and processes to diagnose the needs of new joiners and ensure they quickly get the support they need?</p>	<p>i. Leaders' understanding of the differing needs of pupils is superficial; decisions are too often reliant upon assumption/guesswork</p> <p>ii. MAT leaders' priorities for improvement are unclear or too numerous to be manageable and/or do not address the needs of specific groups of pupils or schools within the MAT</p> <p>iii. The MAT's approach to school improvement is not sufficiently refined – or data-informed – to respond to evidence of pupil and school needs</p> <p>iv. The MAT's approach to improvement is inflexible and doesn't take account of new evidence or the improvement journey's in individual schools</p> <p>v. The MAT doesn't have systems to quickly diagnose the needs of new joiners and develop a bespoke plan for support and intervention to meet their needs</p>	<p>i. MAT and school leaders go beyond headline data to understand variations and trends in performance between groups of pupils within/between schools, phases and geographies</p> <p>ii. MAT leaders have developed a manageable set of priorities for improvement to meet the specific needs of their schools, pupils and communities</p> <p>iii. MAT leaders have a deep understanding of the performance of different groups of pupils across its schools and a differentiated approach to meeting the needs of all pupils and schools</p> <p>iv. MAT leaders can point to ways in which they have adapted their approach to meet the needs of schools at different stages of improvement and built improvement capacity for growth</p> <p>v. The MAT quickly diagnoses the needs of new joiners and provides any support needed</p>	<p>R AR AG G</p>

Element	Questions to consider	Red (weak) looks like...	Green (strong) looks like...	Current rating and key evidence
<p>1C. Leading a culture of improvement</p> <p>Aspirations for pupils Non-negotiables vs autonomy for schools Staff engagement Innovation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Is the MAT systematic in how it fosters high aspirations and expectations for pupils in all its schools? ii. Is the MAT clear about what it regards as the non-negotiables for school improvement and where schools have autonomy to decide for themselves? iii. Is the leadership structure of the MAT clear about responsibility for school improvement with clear accountabilities for impact? iv. Do staff across the MAT feel like they have been genuinely engaged in co-constructing the approach to improvement? Are they committed to working across the MAT to support all of its schools? v. Is the MAT's approach to developing consistency and respecting the identity and context of individual schools reviewed and adjusted on the basis of evidence? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Aspirations and expectations are insufficiently ambitious and inconsistent across schools within the MAT ii. There is confusion and inconsistency over what are MAT-wide expectations and what schools are able to decide for themselves iii. It is unclear how responsibility for school improvement is structured across the Trust or how it relates to the leadership of teaching and learning within individual schools iv. Staff feel that they have not been involved in developing, and are not motivated by, the approach to improvement which has consequences for levels of engagement with the MAT and willingness to support others v. There is unhelpful rigidity in some aspects of the relationship between the MAT and their schools, coupled with too much fluidity in other areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Aspirations and expectations for all pupils are universally ambitious in all MAT schools and this is systematically reinforced by MAT leaders ii. The MAT has a clear rationale for what decisions and activities it expects to happen at MAT level, cluster (or region) level and school level. iii. The relationship between the leadership and accountability for school improvement at school and MAT level is clear and well understood by all iv. The MAT has opportunities for school leaders and staff to engage with and participate in development of school improvement initiatives at whatever point the school joins v. The balance between autonomy and consistency is reviewed and adjusted in light of evidence and feedback from school leaders within the MAT 	<p>R AR AG G</p>

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2. People and partners				
<p>2A. Building capacity for improvement</p> <p>Capacity for school improvement Using the MAT's best leaders and teachers External partners</p>	<p>i. Does the MAT have a clear strategy which sets out how it will structure and locate capacity for school improvement both in its current state and to meet the demands of any anticipated growth?</p> <p>ii. Does the MAT have a clear system for identifying who are its best leaders and teaching staff and which schools have strength in specific phases or subjects?</p> <p>ii. Are system leaders and lead practitioners being used strategically to support other schools, model good practice and coach their peers across the MAT?</p> <p>v. Does the MAT know where its areas of weakness are, in terms of curriculum and teaching and learning performance and how it plans to tackle them with sufficient rigour and urgency?</p> <p>v. Does the MAT make use of an intentional and prioritised set of partnerships and networks that contribute to improvement?</p>	<p>i. The MAT lacks the structures, expertise or capacity to deploy teaching and learning support effectively across its schools in response to identified needs</p> <p>ii. Where pockets of expertise exist, it is often in isolation and not widely known; as a result, schools look externally before looking to internal colleagues</p> <p>iii. The MAT hasn't yet developed mechanisms to use its most effective leaders/practitioners to support and develop other staff and schools across the MAT</p> <p>iv. The MAT does not understand its main weaknesses and/or does not have a clear plan to address these weaknesses (including using external expertise where appropriate)</p> <p>v. Limited and incoherent use is made of hubs of recognised expertise such as teaching schools, National Leaders of Education (NLEs), and lead teachers.</p>	<p>i. MAT leaders organise the teaching and learning support between schools, clusters and the centre based on a clear, evidence-informed theory of action and evidence of impact</p> <p>ii. MAT leaders have a strong understanding of where specific expertise exists across the MAT and how it can be used to support other schools, and develop system leaders alongside key partners</p> <p>iii. The MAT adopts carefully considered approaches to using system leaders and lead practitioners and promotes knowledge transfer through coaching, modelling and enquiry led learning</p> <p>iv. MAT leaders have a clear understanding of their weaknesses and a plan for addressing them; they are open to learning from and with others</p> <p>v. Recognised hubs of expertise such as Teaching Schools, National Leaders of Education (NLEs), or lead teachers play an integral part in supporting the improvement of schools and the MAT can articulate the purpose and impact of these partnerships.</p>	<p>R AR AG G</p>

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<p>2B. Recruiting, developing and retaining talent</p> <p>Recruiting to the MAT Staff Progression Talent Management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Does the MAT have a clear approach to recruiting staff at all levels - teaching assistant, teachers and leaders? Do staff seek to join the MAT or do they see employment as largely defined in the context of an individual school? ii. Does the MAT have a well-developed strategy for developing teaching staff throughout their careers from ITT to expert? iii. Do all staff understand what opportunities for progression look like across the MAT and how they can gain promotion? iv. Does the MAT have a common model for appraising staff and identifying priorities for development and improvement? v. Is there a succession planning and talent management strategy across the MAT, supported by formal development programmes? vi. Does the MAT have a clear strategy to promote staff well-being and manage workload? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Staff recruitment and development is delegated to schools; there is no co-ordinated approach across the MAT; staff decide whether to join based on the school rather than being part of the wider MAT ii. Teaching staff and leaders are not able to benchmark their current performance against clear expectations; which restricts the MATs ability to support promotion and development opportunities iii. Progression and promotion opportunities are not understood by staff and not used strategically in order to grow/retain talented teachers and leaders iv. There is no common model for appraisal; appraisals are left to individual schools to manage on their own and do not focus on development and improvement of staff across the MAT v. There is no systematic approach to developing talent across the MAT; staff have to find their own opportunities to develop and may choose to leave the MAT to find new opportunities for promotion and development as a result vi. The approach to staff wellbeing and workload is unclear across the MAT or is left to academies to determine for themselves with little interest from the MAT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The MAT has a clear approach to recruiting and developing the best staff in line with its vision; staff are attracted to a school because it is part of the MAT ii. The MAT provides consistent expectations for the standards teachers are required to meet from NQT year onwards; there is a clear development pathway for all staff, which might include placements across the MAT iii. Progression and promotion across the MAT is clear and transparent and give staff who demonstrate their effectiveness opportunities to progress iv. A shared model for appraisal helps school and MAT leaders make informed choices on deployment and development; appraisal conversations help staff grow as professionals v. The MAT is implementing a clear talent management strategy to place staff where they are most needed; aspiring middle and senior leaders are deployed strategically and supported by formal development programmes vi. The MAT has a clear approach to staff wellbeing and workload that identifies actions that both the MAT and academies can take to actively support staff at all stages of their career 	<p>R AR AG G</p>

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3. Teaching and learning				
<p>3A. Approach to Pedagogy</p> <p>Pedagogical principles Sharing practice across the MAT Evaluation/evidence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Are the principles which underpin the MAT's approach to teaching and learning visible and understood by all? ii. Is there a shared understanding and conversation across the MAT about what great teaching and learning looks like based on research and evidence? iii. Does the MAT provide regular opportunities to share and learn from outstanding practice? iv. Does the MAT designate phase/ subject experts who are responsible for deepening subject knowledge and developing the curriculum and schemes of work? v. Does the MAT have clear expectations and systems for a well-ordered learning environment and addressing the needs of pupils with behaviour issues? vi. Is there a coherent approach to evaluating the impact of specific pedagogies and interventions within the MAT? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The MAT has not yet developed or defined the core principles which will underpin its approach to teaching and learning ii. There is wide variation in the pedagogical approaches employed across individual schools which make it difficult to embed a shared language of learning or provide informed leadership of teaching and learning across the MAT iii. There are little/no opportunities for teaching staff to see great teaching in practice iv. Collective subject leadership across the MAT is underdeveloped. Where phase/subject experts have been designated their role is unclear and not adding value to schools v. Behaviour management and the learning environment is left to individual schools to manage with mixed and varied results vi. Individual approaches to the development of teaching and learning are isolated within individual schools, limiting opportunities for MAT wide development or improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The MAT's approach to teaching and learning is underpinned by core principles informed by a wide evidence base of proven practice ii. The MAT's principles of learning provide a common language which facilitates conversations about teaching and learning across the MAT iii. There are regular opportunities for teaching staff to see and learn from really great practice iv. Phase and subject expertise across the MAT plays a vital role in developing excellent subject and phase pedagogy v. MAT leaders set clear expectations for the learning environment. Schools are able to access strong systems for behavioural support when needed leading to high standards across the MAT vi. Fresh approaches are introduced in a carefully managed way and forensically evaluated before being rolled out across the MAT 	<p>R AR AG G</p>

Element	Questions to consider	Red (weak) looks like...	Green (strong) looks like...	Current rating and key evidence
<p>3B. Leadership of teaching</p> <p>Role/impact of school and middle leaders</p> <p>Skills of leaders of teaching and learning</p> <p>Other support for improving teaching</p>	<p>i. Does the MAT enable leaders of teaching and learning to have time to consider their impact on improving learning across the MAT?</p> <p>ii. Are school/middle leaders supported and empowered as leaders of teaching and learning? Are they equipped to help teachers adopt highly effective techniques in the classroom?</p> <p>iii. Does the MAT invest in developing the skills and capacity of leaders to lead and facilitate teacher training and development?</p> <p>iv. How does the MAT invest in both the design and delivery of high quality programmes and support to improve teaching and teachers?</p> <p>v. How effectively do MAT leaders use evidence in their leadership of teaching?</p> <p>vi. Does the MAT have systems for engaging and involving pupils on how to improve teaching and learning?</p>	<p>i. The MAT does not prioritise the leadership of teaching and learning, delegating it entirely to individual schools</p> <p>ii. The role of middle leaders as leaders of teaching and learning is underdeveloped. Too frequently, middle leaders are managers of staff and systems, but are not expected/supported to help teachers grow as professionals</p> <p>iii. Leaders lack the confidence or expertise to identify effective teaching practice and/or provide support and are not supported to develop these skills</p> <p>iv. The MAT has not developed a menu of effective approaches or programmes to systematically improve the quality of teaching and learning</p> <p>v. New approaches to teaching and learning are adopted without a clear rationale and strong evidence that they will be an improvement on existing practice</p> <p>vi. There are few opportunities to engage with pupils' experience of teaching and learning or use pupil voice to improve teaching and learning across the MAT</p>	<p>i. Leadership of teaching and learning is prioritised as the most important improvement activity in schools</p> <p>ii. Middle leaders have an explicit role as leaders of teaching and learning and are effectively empowered and supported with high quality professional development</p> <p>iii. Middle leaders have the expertise and tools to lead constructive conversations on effectiveness of teaching and learning</p> <p>iv. The MAT's leadership of teaching is informed by its core principles of learning bringing coherence and depth to the design and development of programmes and support</p> <p>v. The MAT is involved in developing and learning about what works, uses evidence intelligently, and changes practice based on their own in-school evaluations and external research</p> <p>vi. There are strong systems in place for engaging and involving pupils and using this information to improve teaching and learning</p>	<p>R AR AG G</p>

Element	Questions to consider	Red (weak) looks like...	Green (strong) looks like...	Current rating and key evidence
<p>3C. Evidence based professional learning models</p> <p>Culture of learning Approaches to professional learning Involving pupils</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Are MAT leaders creating and sustaining a 'culture of purposeful learning' in every school? ii. Does the MAT have a clear approach to professional learning and development that combines coaching, classroom practice and engagement in research? iii. Are teachers engaged in the right balance between formal learning and developing their practice with their peers? iv. Are systems for teachers to observe and develop aspects of classroom practice together linked to the MAT's and schools' priorities for improvement? v. Does the MAT have a culture and system for encouraging, assessing and scaling up innovation and the identification and dissemination of best practice? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Opportunities are not intentionally provided for staff to innovate or improve their own practice through professional learning and development activities ii. The means for practice-based professional learning exist only in isolated pockets (if at all); and there is no clear approach across the MAT to professional learning iii. Staff seldom engage in purposeful inquiry with their peers iv. The focus of any practice-based learning is ad-hoc and not related to the MAT's priorities v. The MAT cannot articulate its approach to best practice. As a result, there is no systematic process for taking successful innovations to scale 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. MAT leaders foster a culture of learning in which staff can develop their practice and test the impact of their practice through structured reflection ii. The MAT has developed the infrastructure and networks to support shared professional learning and development – e.g. through subject networks, peer-to-peer coaching and observations and reflections on classroom practice linked to the MAT's priorities iii. Staff gain confidence through purposeful models of observation, development of practice and exposure to outstanding practice, and can say how this has helped them improve iv. Practice-based learning and research are focused on areas likely to make the biggest impact on the MAT's priorities v. The MAT has a clearly articulated approach to best practice. Evidence-based innovation thrives. There are clear processes for realising the benefits of successful innovation across the MAT 	<p>R AR AG G</p>

Element	Questions to consider	Red (weak) looks like...	Green (strong) looks like...	Current rating and key evidence
4. Curriculum and assessment				
<p>4A. Curriculum principles, intent and alignment</p> <p>Age-related expectations Curriculum design Curriculum resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Does the MAT clearly articulate the shared curriculum principles and its curriculum intent? ii. Are there common age-related expectations for each year group across the MAT? (e.g. do all staff agree on what represents a year's worth of progress?) iii. Is curriculum content and design informed by the age-related expectations and the principles that underpin the MAT's vision? iv. Do the curriculum models align with the MAT shared curriculum principles and/or where local curriculum decisions are made do they remain within the MAT curriculum intent? v. Does the MAT expect and facilitate shared lesson planning and the development of shared schemes of work and resources to support teacher workload? vi. Can the MAT clearly demonstrate the impact of the curriculum design? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The MAT has not clearly defined its shared curriculum principles and leaders and staff within academies are unclear about the MATs curriculum intent ii. Staff do not have a shared understanding, and limited opportunities to benchmark, pupil progress; as a result, there are no consistent expectations as to what constitutes year-on-year progress across the MAT iii. The MAT's vision and common expectations have not informed the creation/selection of a shared approach to curriculum, based on evidence iv. Individual academy curricula do not align to the MAT curriculum principles and are not consistent with the curriculum intent. v. The MAT does not facilitate the development and dissemination of shared curriculum and lesson resources and as a result, efforts are duplicated across the MAT vi. There are few opportunities to review the effectiveness of the curriculum for all pupils. The curriculum has evolved without the use of evidence, and as a result, pupils lack continuity year to year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The MAT has a clearly defined curriculum intent and principles which informs the work of leaders and staff in all academies across the MAT ii. Staff across the MAT have shared expectations of pupil progress; these are regularly benchmarked within the MAT and externally against others iii. Everyone in the MAT has a consistent answer to the question: 'what do we want pupils to know and achieve?'; this informs a disciplined and evidence-based approach to curriculum development iv. Staff understand which elements of the curriculum are common across the MAT, and where they have discretion to innovate, and why. They can clearly articulate how their curriculum fits with the wider MAT curriculum intent v. Staff are expected and supported by the MAT to develop and access shared resources and evaluate their effectiveness vi. MAT leaders regularly review the curriculum from the perspective of pupils to ensure it provides continuity for pupils' learning and promotes effective transitions 	<p>R AR AG G</p>

Element	Questions to consider	Red (weak) looks like...	Green (strong) looks like...	Current rating and key evidence
<p>4B. Intentional use of assessment</p> <p>MAT approach to assessment Assessment tools Moderation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Is the MAT clear about the purposes of the different types of assessment and how they inform conversations about progress in relation to the agreed age-related expectations? ii. Do staff/schools across the MAT follow a broadly consistent approach to assessment based on shared training and peer review? iii. Does the MAT operate common assessment cycles across its schools? iv. Does the MAT systematically review and share the impact of different assessment tools and approaches used by schools? v. Does the MAT have systems in place for shared moderation? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The rationale underpinning the MAT's approach to assessment is underdeveloped or not widely understood ii. An inconsistent approach to assessment makes comparisons across the MAT difficult iii. Assessment cycles are not aligned, the variation between schools means that data on progress is available at different times and therefore hinders meaningful comparison or moderation iv. The impact of different assessment tools is not shared, or is not considered at all v. There are few opportunities and no systems for shared moderation of assessments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The purpose of both formative and summative assessment is understood across the MAT, and aligned to the vision, curriculum and age-related expectations ii. A clear policy is being followed on the regularity and consistency of assessment; this is reinforced by shared training and peer review iii. Assessment cycles are common across all schools in the MAT, allowing a common picture of progress and comparisons between schools iv. MAT leaders ensure that the impact of all assessment tools in use is systematically reviewed, and that the results are shared widely, and used to inform future decisions v. Shared moderation of assessments is routine and underpins the MATs expectations of what constitutes strong progress 	<p>R AR AG G</p>

Element	Questions to consider	Red (weak) looks like...	Green (strong) looks like...	Current rating and key evidence
5. Quality assurance and accountability				
<p>5A. Knowing schools quantitatively</p> <p>Use of data across the MAT Granularity of data Performance conversations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Does the MAT have a well-developed approach to the use of data? Have data cycles been structured to ensure that information is collected in a timely enough manner to enable effective quality assurance and intervention? ii. Is performance information shared openly across the MAT? Are conversations between MAT and school leaders open and effective? iii. Do MAT leaders have an integrated picture of performance, pulling together data on progress, attainment, wellbeing, exclusions and other qualitative information? iv. Does the MAT benchmark its performance and progress with other MATs/schools? v. Does the MAT operate smart data systems – i.e. once inputted, can the data be aggregated, disaggregated and analysed for different schools/groups of students? vi. Do performance and appraisal conversations of school and MAT leaders reflect the progress being made and capture the future focus of improvement? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The MAT does not have a consistent approach to capturing data and data collection cycles are not structured to enable/inform timely conversations about quality and improvement which lead to impact ii. A culture of transparency has not been established; data is not widely shared. MAT-school conversations are infrequent, superficial and/or defensive iii. MAT leaders' view of performance is limited to their own internal data/opinions and does not take account of the full range of information available iv. Any benchmarking is broad-brush and only with schools' local/traditional competitors v. Data collection/analysis is cumbersome and involves duplication of effort; schools are often asked for the same information multiple times which increases workload pressures vi. Performance conversations focus on compliance, process and assigning blame 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The MAT has a well thought out Data strategy that gives MAT and school leaders and staff access to data when they need it during the year ii. Data is shared widely across the MAT and informs regular, honest, action-focused conversations with schools iii. At all levels (classroom, subject, phase and school) there is effective use of the full range of available data to identify issues regarding progress and to target interventions effectively iv. Performance and progress for each school and the MAT as a whole is specifically benchmarked against schools/MATs with similar characteristics regionally and (if appropriate) nationally v. A single MIS system is used effectively across the MAT to allow easy analysis of data by school or student group which helps reduce staff workload vi. Performance conversations focus on improvement and development and are informed by evidence 	<p>R AR AG G</p>

Element	Questions to consider	Red (weak) looks like...	Green (strong) looks like...	Current rating and key evidence
<p>5B. Knowing schools well qualitatively</p> <p>Reviewing progress Parent/pupil feedback Peer Review</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Do MAT and cluster leaders regularly meet with school leaders to review progress and is there a clear agenda/template for the conversation so that it is replicated with consistency across all schools? ii. Are MAT and school leaders conducting regular learning reviews across the schools in the MAT in order to triangulate KPIs with the daily lived experience in schools? iii. Is the MAT systematically building in parental and pupil feedback into its assessment of how well schools are progressing? iv. Is the MAT using a rigorous quality assurance or peer review model (involving schools within and/or beyond the MAT) to help schools identify development needs? v. Is the MAT using the expertise of staff and middle leaders to work on issues where the need for improvement is identified? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The MAT has not yet developed a routine cycle of school improvement review and monitoring activities. Meetings between MAT/cluster and school leaders are infrequent, ad-hoc and unstructured ii. MAT leaders' views of what is happening in schools is based purely on reported information and occasional lone visits iii. Parent and pupil feedback is not considered by MAT leaders when assessing school performance and progress iv. There is no systematic approach to quality assurance or peer review. Schools are left alone to identify their own development needs with no outside support v. Staff and middle leaders are not seen as a resource for problem-solving across the MAT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. MAT/cluster and school leaders meet regularly, in step with the rhythm of the school year; their meetings systematically cover the different aspects of school performance and improvement and have a clear agenda so that everyone comes ready for a focused conversation that helps drive improvement for all ii. MAT and school leaders regularly visit schools and classrooms together (e.g. for joint learning walks, lesson observations) so that they develop a shared picture of their schools iii. MAT leaders employ a range of techniques to gather parent and pupil feedback; this feedback is an integral part of assessing schools' performance and progress iv. A formal quality assurance or peer review model is in place, enabling school leaders to identify development needs through structured conversations with peers v. Staff and middle leaders are frequently deployed to solve problems across the MAT, based on their expertise 	<p>R AR AG G</p>

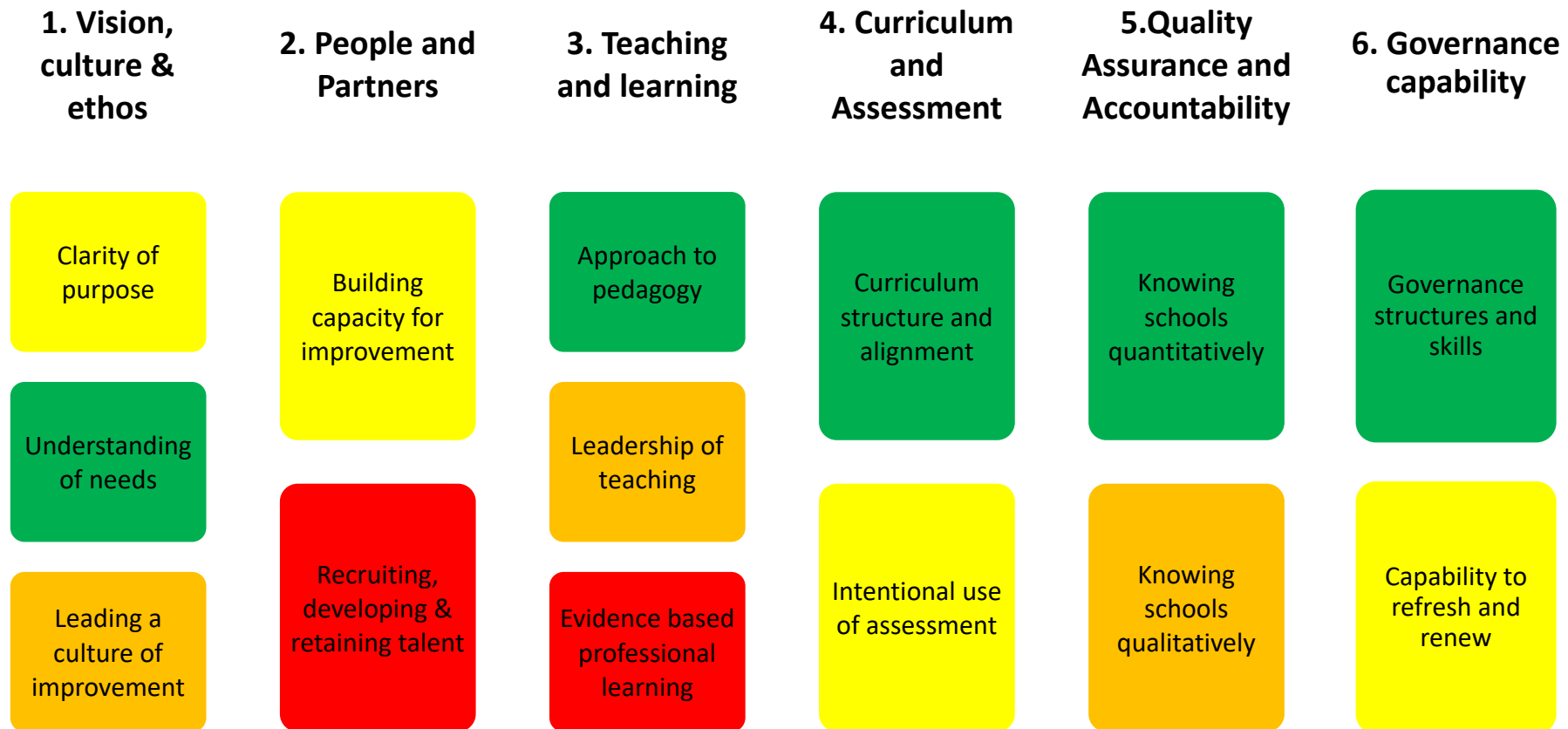
Element	Questions to consider	Red (weak) looks like...	Green (strong) looks like...	Current rating and key evidence
6. Governance capability				
<p>6A. Governance structures & skills</p> <p>Focus on SI Skills to focus on SI Roles and responsibilities for SI</p>	<p>i. Is there a clear focus on school improvement in your Governance structures? Is it a core part of the board's regular cycle of business? Does the board's culture promote effective scrutiny, debate, challenge and decision making around school improvement?</p> <p>ii. Do you have the right level of skills and attitudes at board level to focus on school improvement and provide robust challenge to hold the executive to account? Is there a programme to develop the board's school improvement knowledge and skills?</p> <p>iii. Are the roles of the trust board and its committees (including local bodies) in relation to school improvement clearly defined? Are they clearly set out in the scheme of delegation? Does this work in practice?</p> <p>iv. Is the overview of MAT performance presented in a clear and timely way that empowers the MAT board and its committees (including local bodies) to ask the right questions about school/MAT performance, and exercise their respective accountability functions?</p>	<p>i. There is little or no discussion about school improvement or reflection about what is/is not working at board level to improve schools within the MAT</p> <p>ii. There are no or few board members with the necessary experience and skills to focus on school improvement and no plans in place to develop those skills</p> <p>iii. The role and responsibilities for school improvement between the board and its committees (including local bodies) are confused or unclear and not set out in the scheme of delegation</p> <p>iv. The MAT board and its committees (including local bodies) are unclear about performance across the MAT. Data provided to governance boards/trustees is too high-level, too detailed or otherwise too opaque to enable intelligent questioning and accountability</p>	<p>i. School improvement is a core part of the cycle of business of a Trust board and local boards and there is strong culture of scrutiny and challenge around school improvement at all levels.</p> <p>ii. There are regular opportunities to review the skills and expertise at board level in order to reflect a balance of educational understanding to focus on school improvement. Development opportunities for boards include expectations for school improvement</p> <p>iii. The scheme of delegation identifies clearly the responsibilities to develop the overall school improvement strategy, implement it and evaluate the impact of school improvement activities on pupils</p> <p>iv. The MAT board and its committees (including local bodies) are provided with a clear picture of school performance across the MAT (based on performance data and qualitative information) benchmarked against national expectations and MAT board and local governing bodies regularly challenge leaders</p>	<p>R AR AG G</p>

Element	Questions to consider	Red (weak) looks like...	Green (strong) looks like...	Current rating and key evidence
<p>6B. Capability to refresh and renew the MAT</p> <p>Reviewing Governance Collecting feedback Evaluating and learning from others</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Is the MAT's Governance structure reviewed regularly as fit for purpose and communicated to all stakeholders to comply with Articles of Association and publication requirements? ii. Does the MAT Board regularly review its own performance and effectiveness? Does it use peer review for governance and/or does it facilitate learning between governance boards /trustees across the MAT? iii. Does the development of the MAT's Governance model ensure that there is the right level of succession planning, training and future proofing to changes to the MAT? iv. Does the MAT board have a clear plan for growth, and does it understand the implications of this plan for school improvement capacity? v. Does the MAT board regularly collect feedback from staff, pupils and parents? vi. Is the MAT board looking to learn from other MATs in the region, and from other MATs of comparative size about their approaches to governance and school improvement? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The MAT has not asked itself questions about the effectiveness of its Governance structures and hasn't commissioned an external review. ii. The board rarely or never reviews its own effectiveness. There is little visibility between local bodies across the MAT and no sharing of effective practice iii. The MAT has no succession plan in place for Governance iv. The MAT has a vague aspiration to grow but no clear sense of timescales or detailed aspirations. It has not considered the implications of growth for its school improvement model or capacity. v. The MAT doesn't collect feedback from staff, parents or pupils and/or this information is not being shared regularly with the Board vi. The MAT is focused inwards and not looking to learn from other MATs at this stage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The MAT can demonstrate a development of governance over time in order to best meet the needs of the schools in the Trusts. The MAT has reviewed its own Governance in the last 3 years. ii. The Board regularly reflects on its own effectiveness and there are clear mechanisms for the Board to engage with local bodies and for local bodies to learn from each other and share good practice iii. The MAT has a clear succession plan for Governance iv. The MAT has clear and well articulated aspirations for growth and a detailed plan to deliver them. This includes plans to build Governance, Leadership and School Improvement capacity v. The Board receives regular reports on staff, pupil and parent views including an overview of any complaints vi. MAT leaders regularly network and share best practice with colleagues developing a shared understanding of the opportunities and challenges across a sub region 	<p>R AR AG G</p>

Capturing the output from your self-assessment

We suggest you might want to capture the outcomes from your self-assessment in a 'heat map' like the one shown below so that you can easily identify from your self-assessment the priority areas where most capacity building work may be needed. You can edit the boxes below to capture judgements for your MAT.

Remember that the purpose of the tool is diagnostic, not judgemental; areas that are judged green or amber green may still have areas for improvement. Areas that you have judged amber red or red however are likely to have the most important priorities where capacity needs to be built most urgently.



Priorities for improvement

As well as capturing the overall scores from your self-assessment, you may also find it helpful to make a note of the key issues you identified for each of the priority areas and start to identify the actions you plan to take as a MAT to address these issues. This will allow you to track your progress over time as well. You can use the table below to capture the specific issues identified by your self-assessment and the actions you propose to take to address them. The table below has been partially completed with examples to give you a sense of the type of evidence you might have identified and captured from the self-assessment. You can add rows to the table if needed. You may also want to link the priorities/actions identified here to your School/MAT Development Plan.

Focus Area	What were the key issues identified?	What do we need to do about it as a MAT?	What progress do we want to see in the next 12 months?
1C Leading a culture of improvement	(i) Mixed views from staff about expected pupil progress they would want to see (ii) and (iii) Schools confused about their freedom to innovate and lead – waiting for direction from the central MAT too often (iv) Views from staff across the MAT were mixed about how well engaged they felt		
2B Recruiting, developing & retaining talent	(i) There are serious staff shortages across some schools, and we don't have a MAT strategy to address them (ii) (iii) Some staff said they were unclear about the opportunities for progression across the MAT or how to access them		
3B Leadership of Teaching	(i) and (ii) Leaders of teaching and learning were seen as effective but overstretched		
3C Evidence based professional learning	(ii) and (iii) Few opportunities for teachers across the MAT to learn from each other (v) Little pupil involvement in improvement		

Annex A

How to use the MAT School Improvement Capacity Framework

The framework is a development tool to help Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) understand their capacity to support and drive school improvement. The purpose is to help MATs build and strengthen their current capacity and grow their capacity to support more schools.

The framework has been developed by MAT leaders in the South West region, in partnership with the Regional Schools Commissioner's team in the South West, Isos Partnership, and Robert Hill. The framework is owned by the South West MAT Development Strategy Group.

Many MAT leaders have now used the framework with their trusts. MAT leaders in the South West have also worked together in action learning sets, using the framework to guide their discussions.

The following steps suggest how CEOs and Trustees can use the framework, building on the learning and feedback from MATs that have used the framework.

1. Review the Framework

- Familiarise yourself with the scope of the framework. The framework breaks down MAT improvement capacity into 14 elements under 6 main headings. Review each of the elements. In each element there are detailed self-evaluation questions for MATs to consider. Each question also has descriptions of what strong and weak improvement capacity might look like in a MAT.
- The framework does not assume that there is one best way to support and drive school improvement as a MAT. The questions, issues and practices covered by the framework should help to enable all kinds of MATs to review their own capacity and identify how to become more effective in supporting their schools to improve.
- MATs need to feel ownership of the framework and the learning that comes out of conducting a self-review. You may want to explain the purpose of the framework and its potential uses to the MAT Board and senior team to ensure questions have been discussed and the aims are clear before beginning any self-assessment exercise.

2. Use the framework to facilitate discussions within your trust

- You can use the framework in discussions with your senior team, your senior and middle leaders, and/or with your trustees. These can be separate discussions, or a workshop that has representatives from a number of groups. You can review the whole framework in one session or take different elements in separate sessions. Circulating the framework questions and descriptions in advance will help attendees to prepare their thoughts and evidence.
- Use the questions and descriptions to rate your MAT against each element using a four-point scale: red (weak capacity), amber-red, amber-green, green (strong capacity). Descriptions have deliberately not been provided for the amber-red and amber-green ratings. If you think that your MAT matches neither the red nor the green description, think about which end of the scale it is closer to and choose the appropriate rating.
- Capture your ratings and also the rationale and evidence for each judgement. This can be turned into a 'heat map' showing the RAG ratings against each of the elements.

- Some MAT leaders have also used focus group conversations with teachers, phase or middle leaders to test the reality of the ratings that have emerged from the self-review.
- Some MATs have used an external facilitator to support their self-assessment process and provide some independent challenge to the exercise. You could also undertake the review with another MAT so there is an element of peer challenge to your own ratings.

3. Review the outcomes and identify strengths and priorities for improvement

- The framework helps MATs to diagnose their most significant areas of strength and their priorities for improvement, to help them build their capacity for improvement. A 'heat map' of the RAG ratings against each of the elements can help to summarise the picture for your MAT.
- After undertaking one or a number of self-reviews against the framework, use the outcomes to identify where your MAT has areas of strength on which to build and then identify the most important and most urgent priorities for improvement and development.
- Remember: a green rating does not mean that an element is currently perfect, just that it is an area of strength upon which to build. Likewise, a red rating does not imply failure or underperformance, it simply highlights an area where capacity building should be a priority. You will want to prioritise which areas to focus on according to your existing priorities as a MAT and your stage of development – you don't need to try to tackle all the reds at once.
- For MATs that have just formed the framework may feel overwhelming to start with, but it is designed to help you think through where your immediate priorities may be. It may not be appropriate for you to look at the whole framework initially, but you might still want to select some areas that you feel are an immediate priority for your new MAT to focus on.

4. Build outcomes into MAT improvement planning

- You can use the outcomes from your self-review against the framework to help inform your wider improvement planning and reporting to the Board. Some MATs have used the headings from the framework as the headings for their plan and reporting to their Board.
- You may also want to develop MAT-wide school improvement plans to focus on particular areas that you have identified from the self-assessment. This might include considering what improvements and actions are needed, an appropriate timetable for improvements with milestones and success measures, and how to learn from and review progress during the year.

5. Using the framework further

- In the South West MAT leaders have used the framework to support conversations in MAT to MAT action learning sets in which they have identified common strengths and challenges. They have undertaken visits to each other's MATs, shared learning and resources and discussed how to take forward common priorities they have identified.
- The framework might also be used to support Peer Reviews between MATs either to support the overall assessment being undertaken by a MAT or if you want to look at a particular theme in more detail with the involvement of other MAT colleagues.
- MAT leaders in the South West are now beginning to consider how they can use the framework in a regular cycle of review and improvement planning. They expect to undertake further reviews against the whole framework or specific elements, then compare how their ratings have moved on since the

previous self-review. This will enable them to identify further priorities and areas for development which they can build into their own planning and also take forward within their action learning sets with other MATs.

6. Some examples of how MATs have used the framework

Case study 1

Our Trust have been using the Framework for over two years since the first working draft appeared. In my view it absolutely clarifies the systems that leaders need to have in place to be successful system leaders in this 'School-Led' education landscape.

We used it initially in the autumn term 2017 as a MAT temperature/ reality check. I sent out the Framework to three distinct groups of people: Executive leaders and the Trust Chair, Headteachers, and then a larger group of middle leaders whose practice was still very much rooted in the classroom. I met with each group for an afternoon and with each group discussed the questions and let them RAG-rate the sections. The discussion itself was very useful and allowed me to explain the whole Trust perspective particularly with the latter group as well as listen to their views. You may not be surprised to discover that there was not the uniform response I was hoping for.

However, that was a stimulus for further discussion with the combined Heads and Executive group. The discussion for us was more useful than the exact RAG colour rating.

We identified areas for improvement and discussed how important the one red area was in the bigger scheme of things and what we had in place to mitigate risk. This area in the end formed part of an MDIF bid which has allowed us to successfully buy and install a data processing platform that actually met our needs.

We replicated the same process in autumn 2018. We reviewed last year's outcomes from this activity and compared them with the trust priorities, and the middle leaders group were 'delighted' to 'find' we had 'listened' to them! We are all looking forward to autumn 2019 too.

It did allow us to check the progress we were making with the identified areas as well as sell the vision to influential audiences. This has had an impact on the well-being of staff in terms of their perspective on workload and a real excitement about working collaboratively in the trust evidenced by our annual staff questionnaires. We have an excellent response to recruitment and the retention of staff.

The MAT Capacity Framework not only influences our annual priorities and MAT Development Plan but is becoming the common language for the Trustees and Executive leaders with performance management as well. This is not just for the most senior leaders and Headteachers but all staff. Some of the statements from the Framework can be found in job descriptions too.

The Trustees and local governors have been trained on the Framework as it has allowed us to point out to them how all the systems fit together in bringing about school improvement. The non- educationalists that now dominate most trust boards (ours anyway) need the Framework to understand how we achieve the education metrics not just the financial or HR ones. It has a helpful clarity and provides them with questions for appropriate challenge.

Case study 2

Our Trust have used the framework in the following ways:

1. Step 1 was to complete the RAG rating at CEO and Director level. We did this separately and then came together to see if we shared the same understanding of what was strong and what needed developing in the Trust.
2. Step 2 was engaging the Principals of our schools – we asked them to go through the same process but this time in groups – the groups were made up of mixed school type; i.e. primary/secondary/special Principals in each group.
3. Step 3 brought the findings of both Step 1 and step 2 together. This enabled us to agree the key priorities for the Trust.
4. Step 4 The Trust has gone through a whole governance review process. As a Trust we are now looking at how we ensure the framework is a key document that the Trust board uses to demonstrate impact. We also have a Trust dashboard – our ultimate aim is to match the KPIs of the framework onto our dashboard.