



Annual Report 2023–2024





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Our Vision



To grow our community of primary schools across Milton Keynes and the surrounding area, working together to enable more children to access engaging, broad-based learning experiences that lay a strong foundation for their wellbeing and future success.

To help us to realise this vision, Trustees have identified the following **three strategic objectives** that provide a focus for us.

1. Quality of Education



Enhance curriculum design and implementation to ensure that children in all our schools consistently make good progress in the acquisition of knowledge and development of skills across a rich and varied curriculum, with all of our schools taking the steps to be rated at least '**Good with Outstanding Features**' within 2 years of joining the Trust.

2. Growth



Extending the work of the Trust to deliver education in the local area to circa 2,500 children by 2026.

3. Sustainability




Increase the capacity of the Trust to grow central leadership and shared resources to deliver even greater value to the communities we serve.







Ethos




The Grand Union Partnership exists to enable each school in the Trust to thrive.



Each of our schools is focused on creating a community and culture of learning that extends to much more than any simple checklist of activities. Every school community in the Trust has to consider fundamental questions regarding the shape and purpose of the curriculum and the ways in which this is accessed and experienced by our children. We reflect on the welfare and development of each child, seeking to understand and address potential barriers to learning and promote progress.



At the Grand Union Partnership we recognise and celebrate a diverse range of effective approaches to supporting the development and progress of our children. We are focused on reviewing, understanding and maximising the positive impact of the approaches used in each of our schools. The quality assurance and improvement frameworks, staff development and shared curriculum principles that we have developed support this. **Together we make the difference.**



As a Trust we don't prescribe a range of specific curriculum schemes or impose a narrow set of strategies linked to teaching, learning and assessment. Headteachers and their teams, work in partnership with their peers across the Trust and engage in professional dialogue that enables both support and challenge, maintaining a sharp focus on ensuring that **children always come first.**





Foreword

Phil Webster CEO

Grand Union Partnership

As I look back on another successful year across our Trust, I want to express my thanks to everyone involved in the work of the Grand Union Partnership. Our success flows from a continued dedication to put children first—there is much for us all to be proud of.

This has been the first year that I have been CEO full time, without responsibility for leading a school, it hasn't always been a smooth transition—big changes rarely are! Moving from leading the day-to-day running of a school to a more strategic, supportive Trust level role has been challenging and there have been a few moments when I have struggled to reframe the key areas of impact that I need to focus on. I've appreciated the support that I've had from people across the Trust during this time, I look forward to continuing to grow into the role as we move forward into another year.

I have enjoyed the opportunity to talk with staff from across the partnership within the staff focus groups that we introduced this year to follow up on staff survey themes. Some aspects of what we discussed were challenging but I left these conversations feeling confident that, working together, we have both the skills and the commitment required to move forward and continue to make a difference for children across our schools.

The subject networks that we started in the autumn of 2023 have given me a similar sense of the commitment and passion that exists across the Trust, and I look forward to seeing the impact that each of these groups delivers in the coming year. I believe in the importance of children leaving primary school having developed core skills in maths and English, I am equally committed to children engaging with the wider curriculum, igniting a love of learning that will stay with them well beyond their time in school. I have fond memories of experiences that I gained at primary school, it's great to see children across the Trust accessing a wide range of enriching experiences that help them to engage with ideas and opportunities that can fire their ambitions and dreams. Being full time CEO has given me the opportunity to spend a bit more time at each school in the partnership—there is so much going on to be proud of. We have added more to the annual report this year to help us reflect on the breadth of the great work that goes on and consider how we can continue to build on this.





You will see that we're now able to share information regarding how children are engaging with foundation subjects. We hope that the data presented will spark conversations across schools in the Trust and look forward to seeing how things evolve further in 2024–25.

I would like to express my thanks to all staff who contributed to the delivery of an expanding range of curriculum events involving children from across the Trust in the last year. Invention Conventions, events exploring French culture, Harry Baker (a well-known poet) working with year 6 children to inspire their poetry writing, a rounders tournament and the Performing Arts festival held at Stantonbury Theatre are just a few examples of the opportunities that we have offered to children. To hear and see children from each school come together at the end of the Performing Arts festival to sing our new Trust song was heart-warming. The commitment, energy and enthusiasm of staff who have shaped these events is hugely appreciated.

2023–24 has been the first year when we have seen several staff choose to take the opportunity to move between schools within the partnership. I'm really pleased that the way that our schools work together is supporting this to happen. This trend reinforces that whilst each school continues to have its own identity increasingly staff are feeling part of a larger family of schools. During the early days of the Trust this kind of activity wouldn't probably have been considered but as levels of collaboration

continue to expand this change is perhaps a natural extension of our work together.

Over the course of the last year several local schools have been keen to find out more about how we operate as a Trust. Exploring Trust membership involves lots of work for any school community and it is encouraging that a number of schools have been prepared to commit to investing the significant amount of time required to get to know us and find out more about how we work. We enjoy opportunities to meet with other schools and in time, where it's right for all parties concerned, we look forward to welcoming more schools to the partnership. The conversations that we have with other schools help us to reflect on our journey, the impact we're having and consider how we continue to evolve.

I am grateful for the hard work and commitment that staff, leaders, governors and Trustees consistently demonstrate to support the development of our Trust. I am very proud to say that together we are making the difference.

I am also conscious that there is so much more we could do so if you see me walking around your school please feel free to grab me, share your thoughts and ideas and show me the great work you are doing, so I can share it with others.

I wish you all the best for the coming year.

Phil Webster

Chief Executive Officer





Introduction

It was back in 2017 when New Bradwell School and Jubilee Wood Primary School came together to form the Grand Union Partnership. In 2018 Old Stratford Primary School joined us and then in the autumn of 2022, Deanshanger Primary School joined too.

In 2023–24 the Trust educated over **1,600 children**, employing over **220 staff** across our four schools. Schools across the Grand Union Partnership work in very different communities (from those in the heart of Milton Keynes to those in villages in South Northamptonshire) and are different sizes (from 1 to 3 form entry).

The data table below highlights the diversity that exists across the schools in the Trust:

	Nursery Numbers	Reception to Year 6 Numbers	PP	FSM	LAC	SEN	EHCP	EAL	Year 5/6 Mobile	Deprivation Quintile
Deanshanger		304	39	37	2	44	9	16	1	Quintile 1
			13%	12%	0%	14%	3%	5%	1%	Least deprived
Jubilee Wood	30	512	200	200	7	96	5	364	30	Quintile 4
			39%	39%	1%	19%	1%	71%	17%	More deprived
Old Stratford		183	20	20	1	23	5	9	4	Quintile 1
			11%	11%	1%	13%	3%	5%	7%	Least deprived
New Bradwell	45	590	191	185	4	80	37	199	12	Quintile 4
			32%	31%	1%	14%	6%	34%	7%	More deprived
Totals	75	1,589	450	442	14	243	51	588	47	
			28%	28%	0.9%	15%	3%	37%	9%	
National Averages			27%	24.3%	0.3%	13.6%	4.8%	22.8%		

PP = Premium Pupil
FSM = Free School Meals

LAC = Looked After Children
SEN = Special Educational Needs

EHCP = Educational Health Care Plan
EAL = English as an Additional Language

This diversity is something we value; it provides rich opportunities for both children and staff across the Trust, broadening their experiences of school life and creating opportunities to learn from each other. This is reflected in both the expanding range of opportunities that our children have to participate in Trust wide events and the range of networking and professional development activities that our staff can take part in.



Quality of Education

The core focus of the Grand Union Partnership is to provide our children with a great learning experience. This section of the report details the actions we have taken forward across the Trust to continue to develop the curriculum offered in each school and summarises the outcomes that our children have achieved in 2023–24 and feedback from children and their parents regarding key aspects of their experience of school.

Whilst we recognise and value the autonomy that each school has when it comes to making decisions about the curriculum it offers, school leaders continue to use our Trust curriculum principles to inform peer review activities when they visit each school for monitoring purposes. These principles, help us to reflect on the degree to which each school is delivering our aspiration to provide a broad based, progressive, curriculum that is both accessible for all and successfully equipping our children to be ‘secondary ready’.

The following summarises some of the key curriculum initiatives that have been taken forward at each school in 2023–24:

This year saw a strong focus on student wellbeing and academic achievement at **New Bradwell School**. The team implemented a comprehensive Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) programme, leading to improved social and emotional learning outcomes for children. Furthermore, the role of subject leader was introduced across the school, fostering collaboration and expertise—sharing among

teachers. This, alongside the development of middle leadership, has ensured a cohesive and shared ownership of curriculum success. The safeguarding team was broadened, this supported the effective introduction of MyConcern and further advanced a culture that actively promotes safety for all children. Years worth of school improvement work culminated in a successful Ofsted visit in the Autumn term, where the school was awarded an overall ‘**Good**’, with ‘**Outstanding**’ judgements for both Personal Development and Behaviour and Attitudes—a testament to the collective efforts of staff and the school community. This success extends to academic achievements, with improved scores in the Year 4 Multiplication Table Check and a higher percentage of students reaching the combined score at the end of Key Stage 2.

With these positive developments, the school is well-prepared for the upcoming academic year and excited to build upon this strong foundation.



Quality of Education

Staff across the Department linked to **New Bradwell** have been working with Speech and Language Therapists to carry out environmental audits of each class in line with CATHS (Communication at the Heart of the School) guidelines. CATHS is a guide that was written by a speech and language therapist and specialist teacher to help support children with social communication difficulties. It has been a powerful way to audit the classroom environment and support children with their communication needs. Strategies linked to CATHS have been a helpful starting point to aid conversations between the team and speech and language therapists to set outcomes that inform how teachers and teaching assistants work with our children. Early communicators in the Moonbeam class have been successfully using a highly structured visual system to support their communication skills. The team have adopted the Communication in Print software program to facilitate this approach. Communication In Print allows the team to easily make visual symbols to use within the classroom environment or to support the children during lessons. Those children who are non-verbal have gained the ability to express their wants and needs, leading to improved regulation and engagement in the learning environment. The Department has hosted a number of external visitors through 2023–24, many of whom are exploring setting up equivalent provision and are keen to draw on the expertise of the team there.

Maths has gone from strength to strength at **Jubilee Wood** this year. The Early Years and Key Stage 1 classes have taken part in the 'Mastering Number @ KS1 Programme' which has been developed by the NCETM to improve children's fluency and automaticity with number facts. Daily lessons have improved children's recall and they have loved the activities set before them. Meanwhile, work has continued with the DfE Regional Enigma Maths Hub; one of our maths co-leaders has qualified as a Primary Maths Mastery Specialist and is now supporting other schools in the area to develop their Maths teaching, whilst the other maths co-leader has been delivering a Year 5–8 continuity group with local schools, thinking about the development of Maths teaching from primary to secondary. In the area of reading, the school's Reading Lead has participated in the DfE Regional English Hub 'Reading for Pleasure Leadership Programme'. As part of this, reading environments have been developed to further promote the value of reading across the school, and Junior and Infant libraries have been further enhanced to ensure their active use by children. Teachers have been given guidance and resources to ensure that reading corners and stock are organised, appealing and relevant to children. Funding has been raised and allocated to purchase books that reflect children's interests and experiences—chosen by the children themselves.

Daily reading is recorded and celebrated, and the Subject Lead is looking at ways to further develop intrinsic motivation to enjoy independent reading for Upper Key Stage 2 children. The 'Accelerated Reading' programme has been trialled across Key Stage 2 and has proved very effective in guiding children towards texts which are accessible and therefore enjoyable to them. World Book Day activities, well-attended poetry recital performances and book fairs have further raised the profile of reading.

The curriculum at **Deanshanger** has been further developed with a focus on how teachers systematically reinforce core subject knowledge and help children to retain this as they progress through school. Working in partnership with colleagues at the International Primary Curriculum (IPC), the school has implemented a number of strategies that promote 'sticky' knowledge. The Little Wandle Phonics scheme, introduced in January 2022, is now fully embedded at the school and is delivered with strength and consistency. This is reflected both in the outcomes of an external review focusing on early reading and the phonics outcomes that children in year 1 achieved. The member of staff delivering French (a native French speaker) has continued to work with a French teacher who teaches at two other schools in the Trust to embed a new French curriculum at the school. Subject champions have worked closely with staff in order to reflect on and develop many aspects of the curriculum. The Padlet software platform has been used to good effect to collate key planning documents that demonstrate a clear intent for each subject delivered at the school. Children have shared their experiences of the curriculum through subject elevation groups, and monitoring activities at school and Trust level continue to inform development, providing governors at the school with first-hand evidence of the progress being made.

Over the past year, the team at **Old Stratford** Primary School have prioritised enhancing writing attainment across all year groups addressing the decline observed post-COVID. A key strategy

has involved emphasising the quality of teacher input. Teachers have had a focus on creating model writing examples for pupils, incorporating essential grammar principles and key writing strategies to engage readers effectively.

The school transitioned away from previous schemes of work, selectively integrating the most effective components to develop a unique writing cycle closely aligned with scheme for reading. Additionally, the team re-evaluated marking and assessment methods, shifting from year group expectations to grading students against the end of key stage writing criteria. This cohesive approach is already starting to deliver an impact that is evident in the strong key stage 2 writing outcomes detailed later in this section.

Beyond writing, the school have celebrated other successes, particularly in fostering community engagement and enhancing the school environment. One of our teachers, passionate about community involvement, organised regular tea parties for our elderly community. This initiative has been warmly received and has served to strengthen community ties.

Another staff member focused on developing an outdoor nature area, funded by the parental charity association. This beautiful space features sensory plants, wildflower meadows, willow arches, and seating areas for observing nature. The project team also provided a step-by-step guide to maintaining the area, ensuring its sustainability. We look forward to developing ways to incorporate this area into our curriculum in the coming year.

In line with our commitment to sustainability, a staff member established a School Eco Council. This group of pupils regularly meets to promote recycling and sustainable practices within the school. They also take an active role in maintaining our newly developed nature area, developing a culture of environmental stewardship among the pupils.



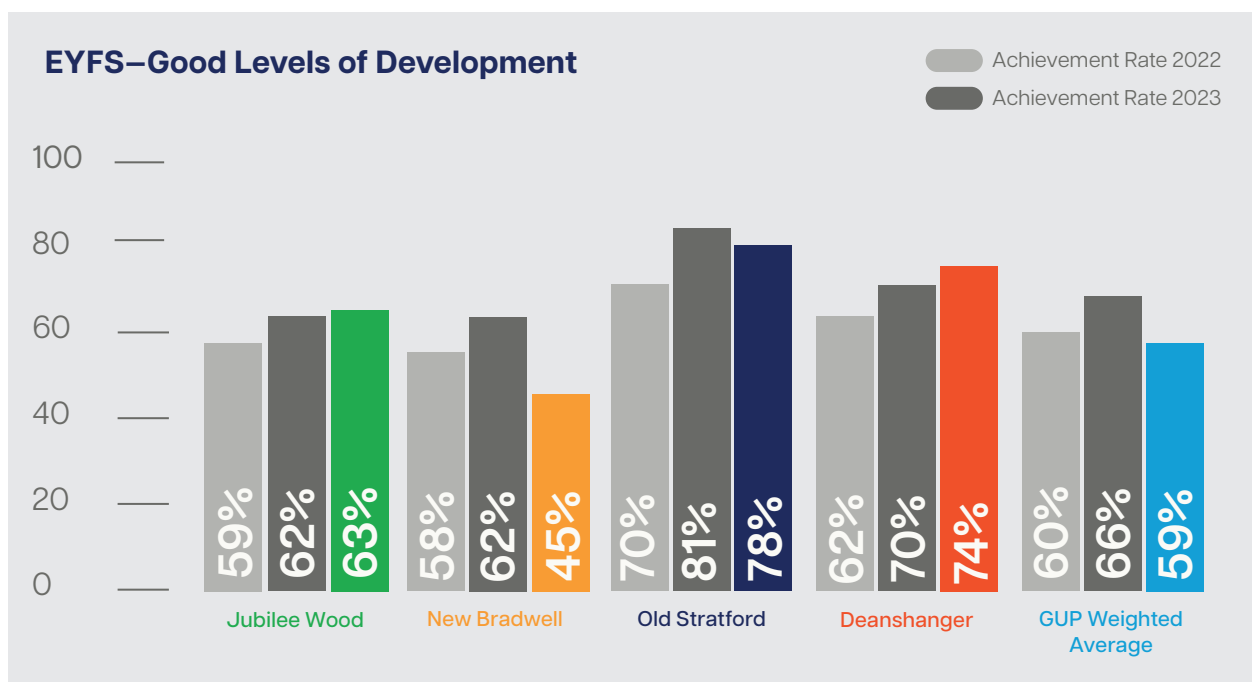
Early Years Foundation Stage

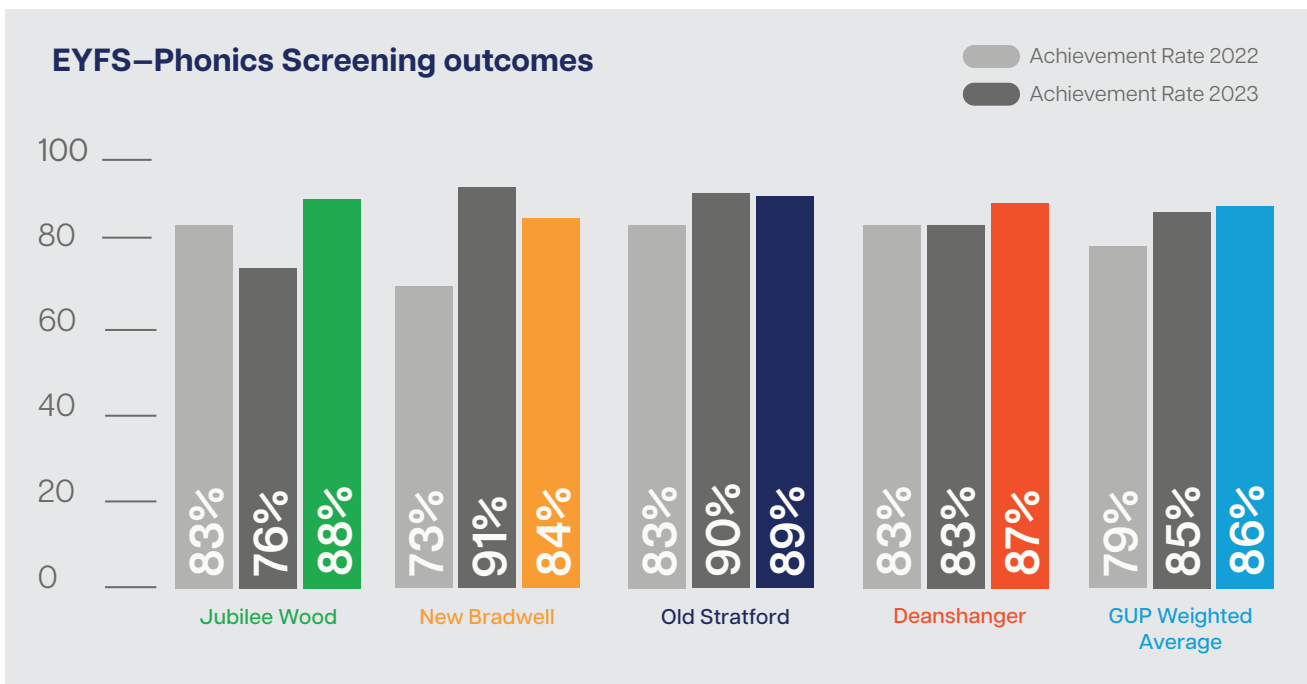
The charts in this section provide an overview of what children across the Trust have achieved in the statutory assessments that were taken in 2023–24. Where possible the national figures included in the charts to data that was published in the summer of 2024.

Early Years Foundation Stage outcomes

Across the Trust **200 children accessed the EYFS curriculum** (60 at Jubilee Wood, 86 at New Bradwell, 23 at Old Stratford and 31 at Deanshanger). The Trust average for children achieving good levels of development was 59% for 2023–24, a 7% decline compared to the previous year. The significant drop in achievement levels at New Bradwell was a key contributor, this will be a key area that the school will be focusing on within the School Development Plan for the coming year.

The chart below details the outcomes across the Trust for the past 3 years.

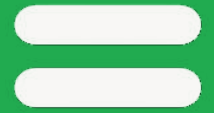




Across the Trust **202 children completed the phonics screening assessment** (56 at Jubilee Wood, 80 at New Bradwell, 27 at Old Stratford and 39 at Deanshanger). The Trust average for children passing phonics screening was 86% for 2023–24, a 1% improvement compared to the previous year and 7% above the national rate in the summer of 2023, equivalent data for 2024 has yet to be published.

The chart above details the outcomes at each school for the past 3 years.

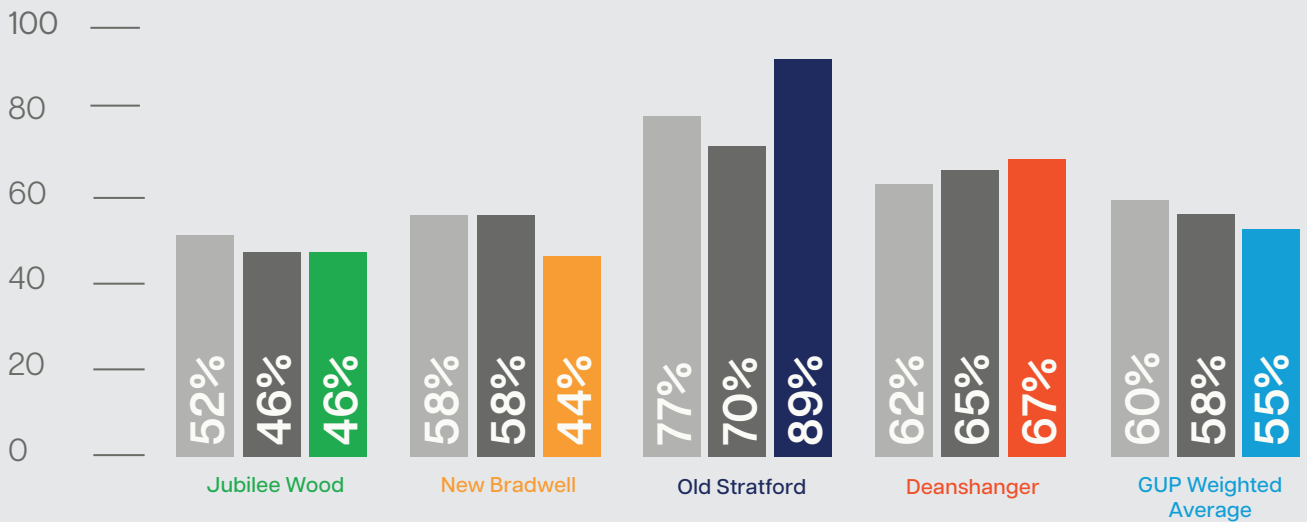




Key Stage One

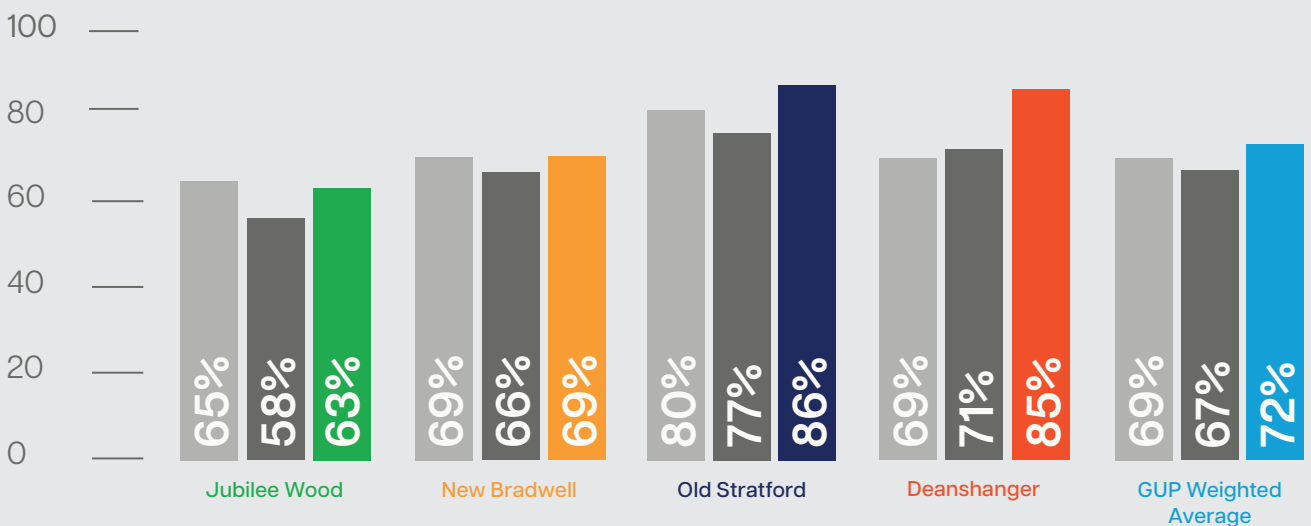
Key Stage 1–Achievement at or above the expected standards for reading, writing and maths (combined)

Achievement Rate 2022
Achievement Rate 2023



Key Stage 1–Achievement at or above the expected standard for reading

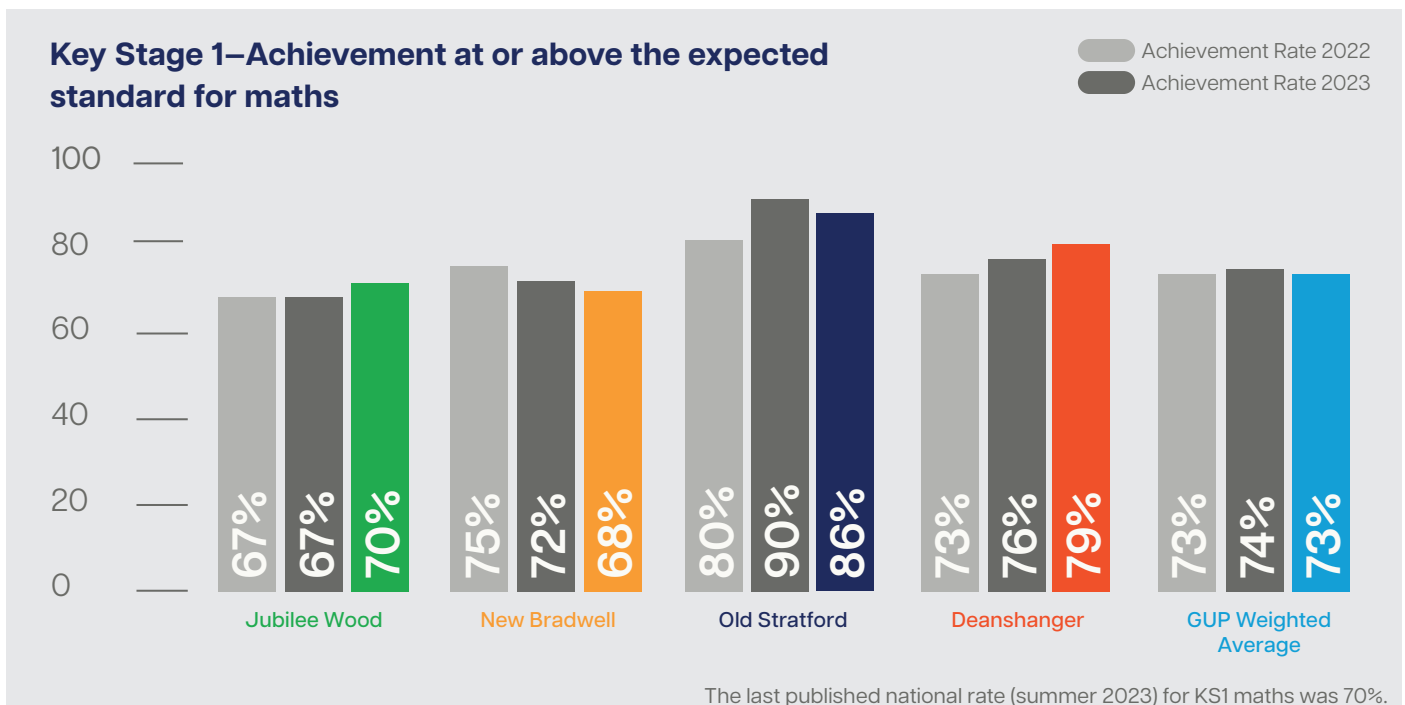
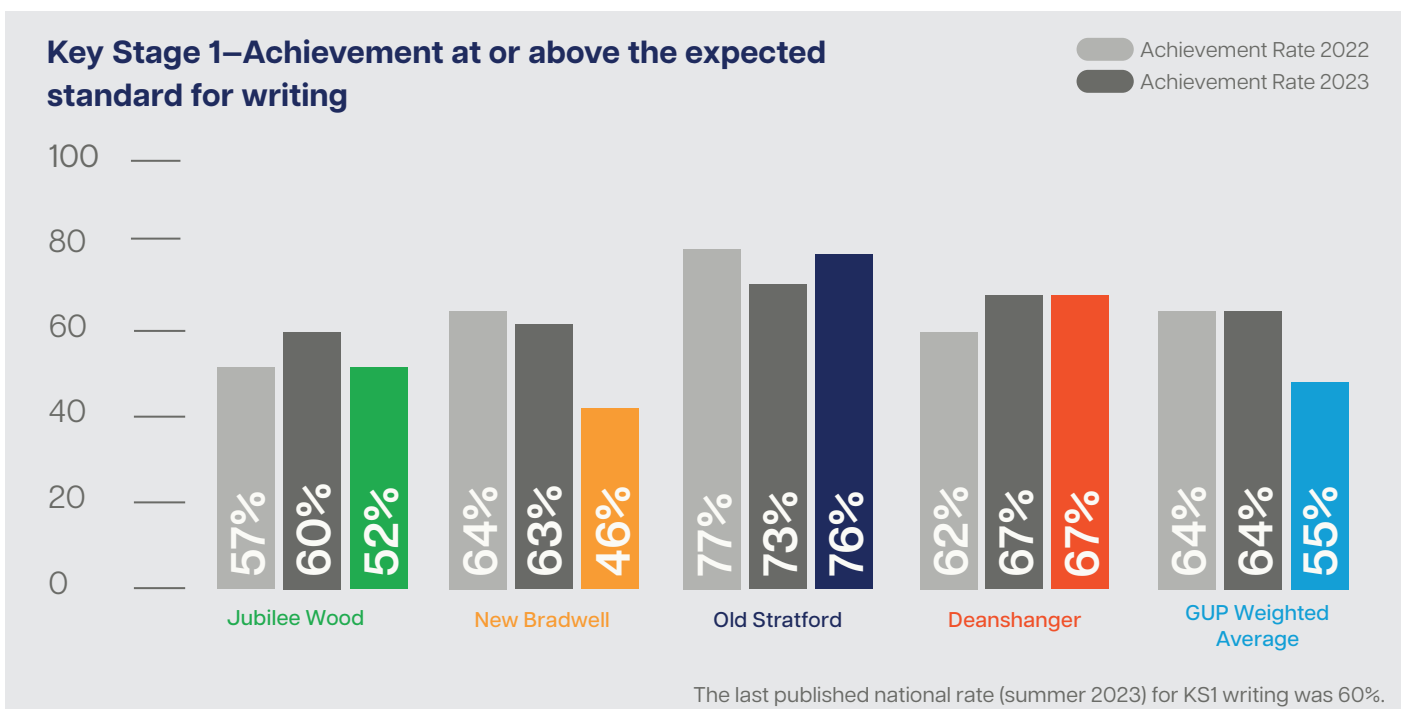
Achievement Rate 2022
Achievement Rate 2023

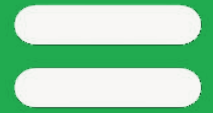


The last published equivalent national rate (summer 2023) for KS1 reading was 68%.

Across the Trust **200 children in year 2 completed their Key Stage 1 SATs** (54 at Jubilee Wood, 80 at New Bradwell, 27 at Old Stratford and 39 at Deanshanger). The Trust average for children achieving the expected standard across reading, writing and maths was 55%, a decline of 3% compared to the previous year. A drop in the levels of achievement for writing was typically the most significant factor for schools in the Trust and this was the only subject where the Trust average for a subject was below that of the last national rate (national rates for Key Stage 1 are no longer released). For teams at both Jubilee Wood and New Bradwell the combined outcomes at Key Stage 1 will be a key area of focus within their School Development Plans, improving the proportion of children achieving the expected standard for writing will be important for both schools.

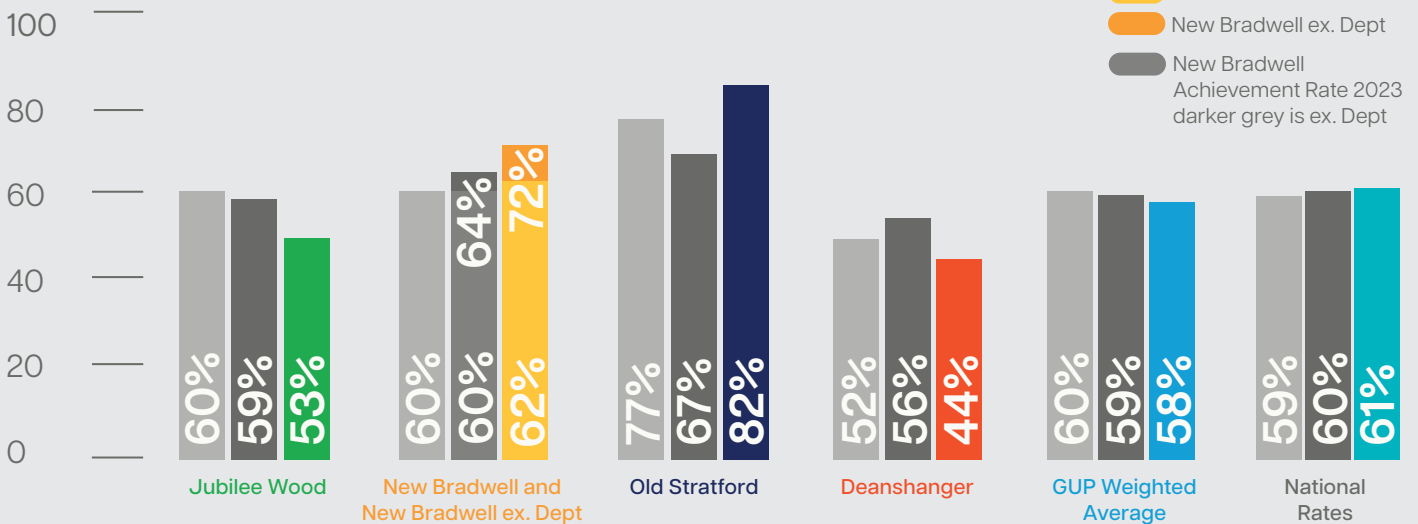
The charts in this section detail both the combined outcomes and individual subject results at each school.



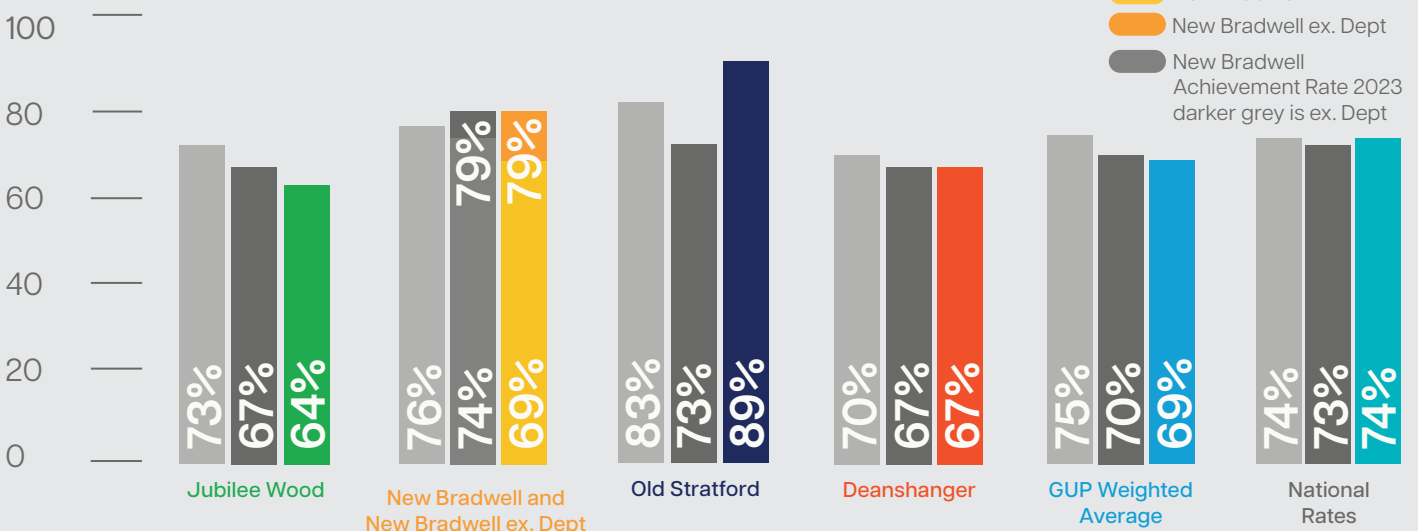


Key Stage Two

Key Stage 2 results—Achievement at or above the expected standards for reading, writing and maths (combined)



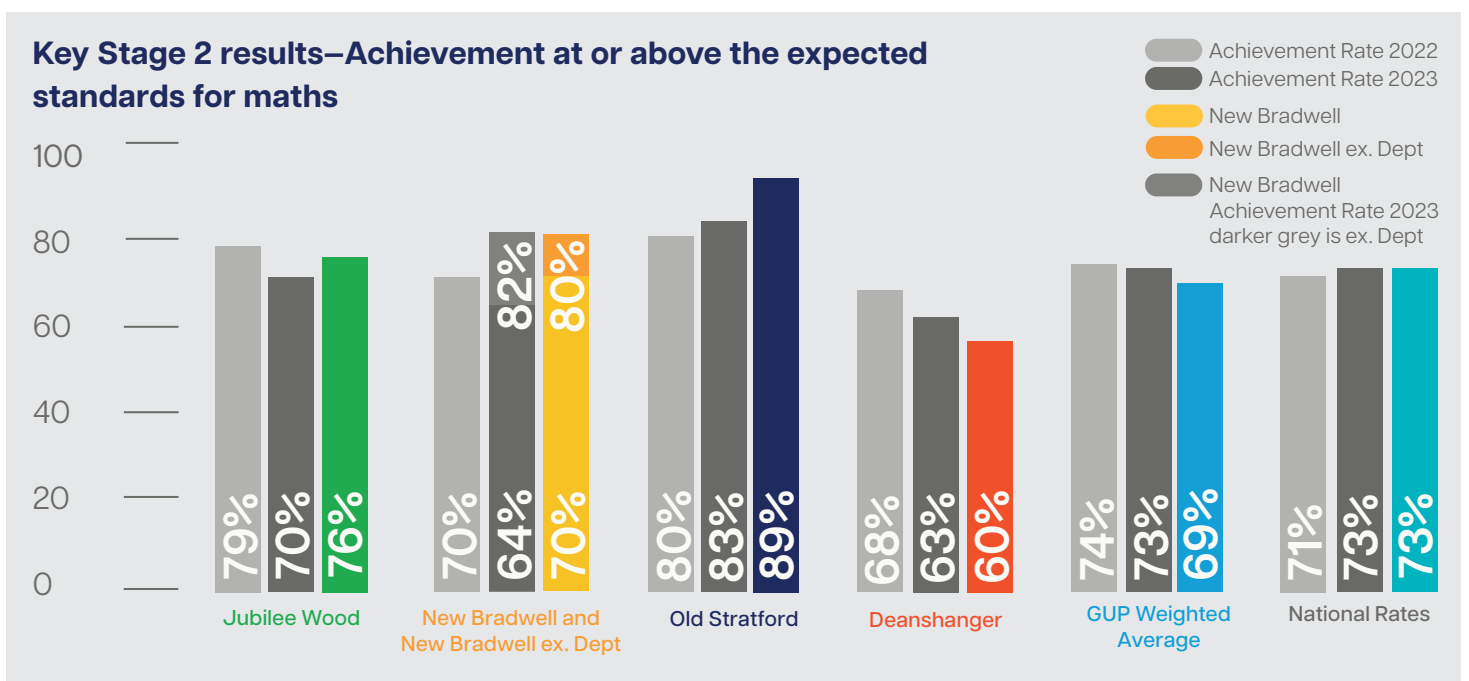
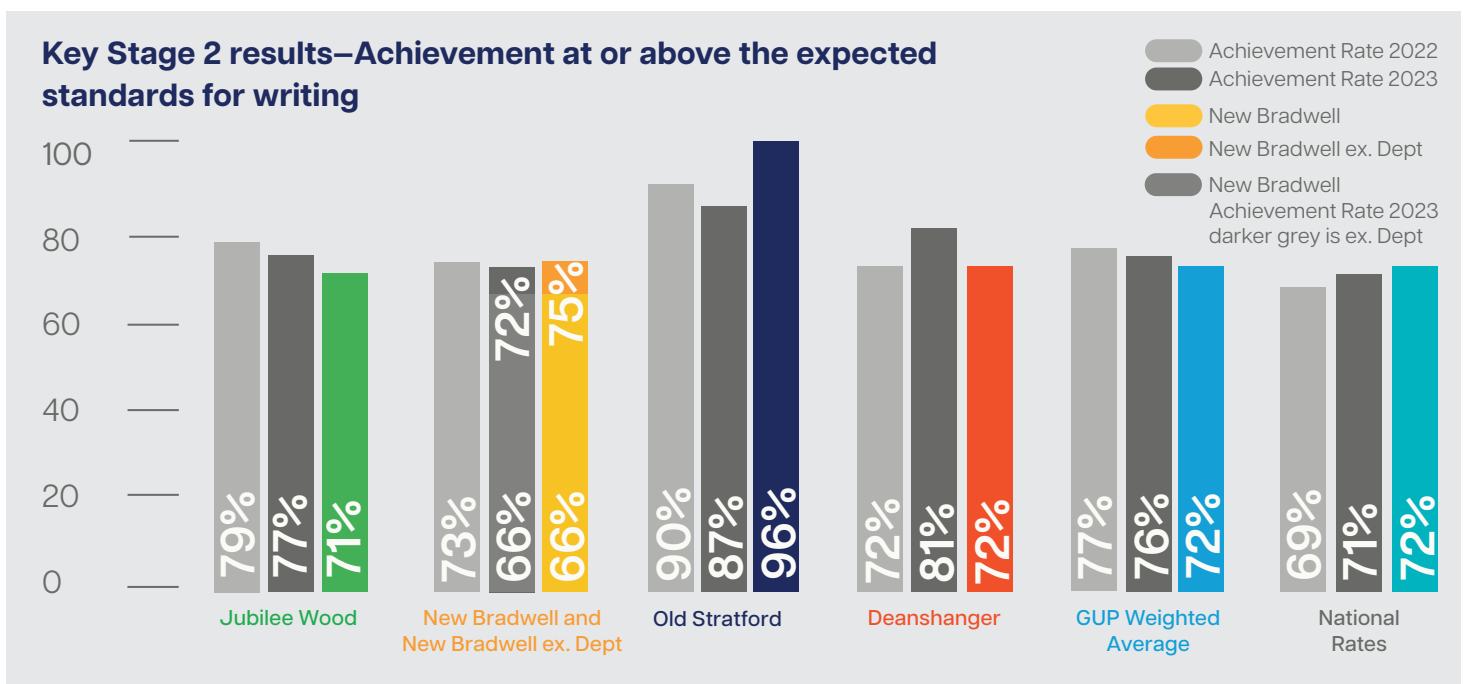
Key Stage 2 results—Achievement at or above the expected standards for reading



Across the Trust **255 children in year 6 completed their Key Stage 2 SATs** (86 at Jubilee Wood, 93 at New Bradwell (including 12 children based at the Department, 3 of whom completed SATs papers), 28 at Old Stratford and 48 at Deanshanger). The Trust average for children achieving the expected standard across reading, writing and maths was 58%, 3% below the equivalent national rate for 2023–24 and 1% below the previous year. For the team at Deanshanger the combined outcomes at Key Stage 2 will be a key area of focus within their School Development Plans. Whilst in part this will

have a focus on improving maths outcomes, it will also involve support and close monitoring to equip children with the knowledge and skills to achieve all three elements of the combined expected standard. Trust monitoring and support activities will be focused on supporting the team throughout the year to address area of under performance.

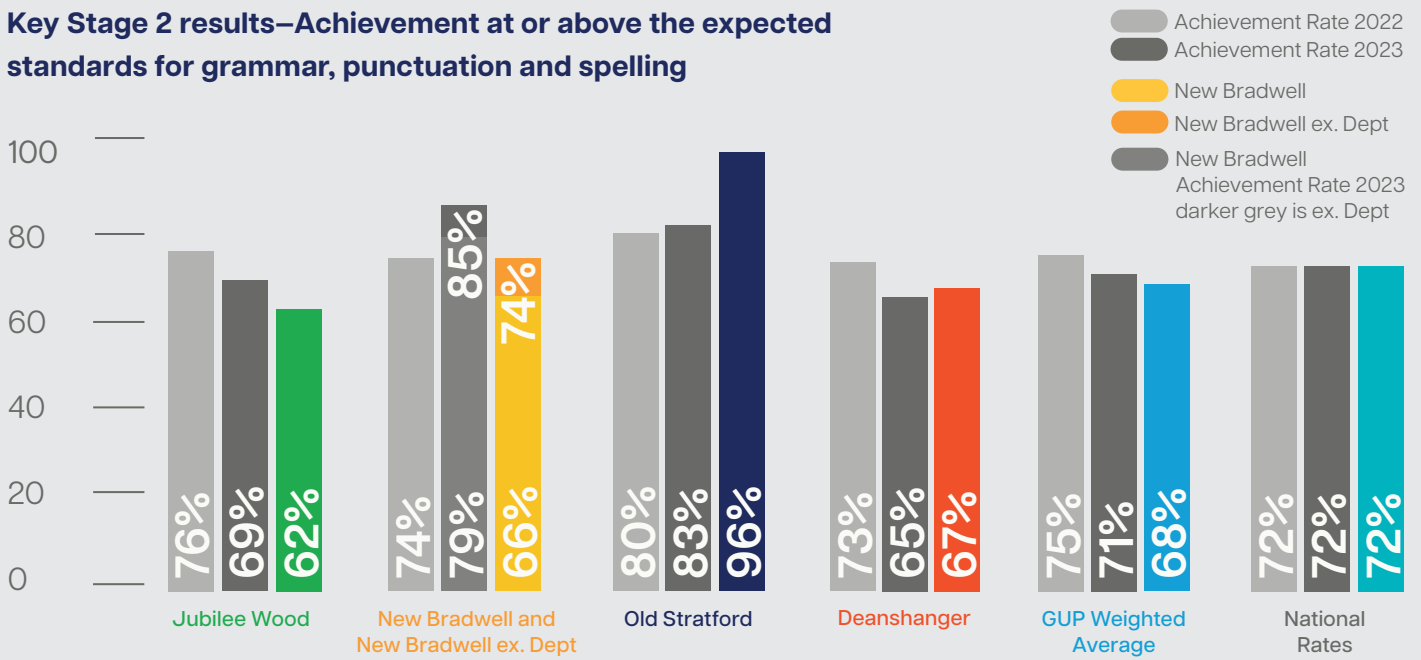
The charts in this section show both the combined outcomes and individual subject results at each school, compared to those achieved in the previous year and national rates.



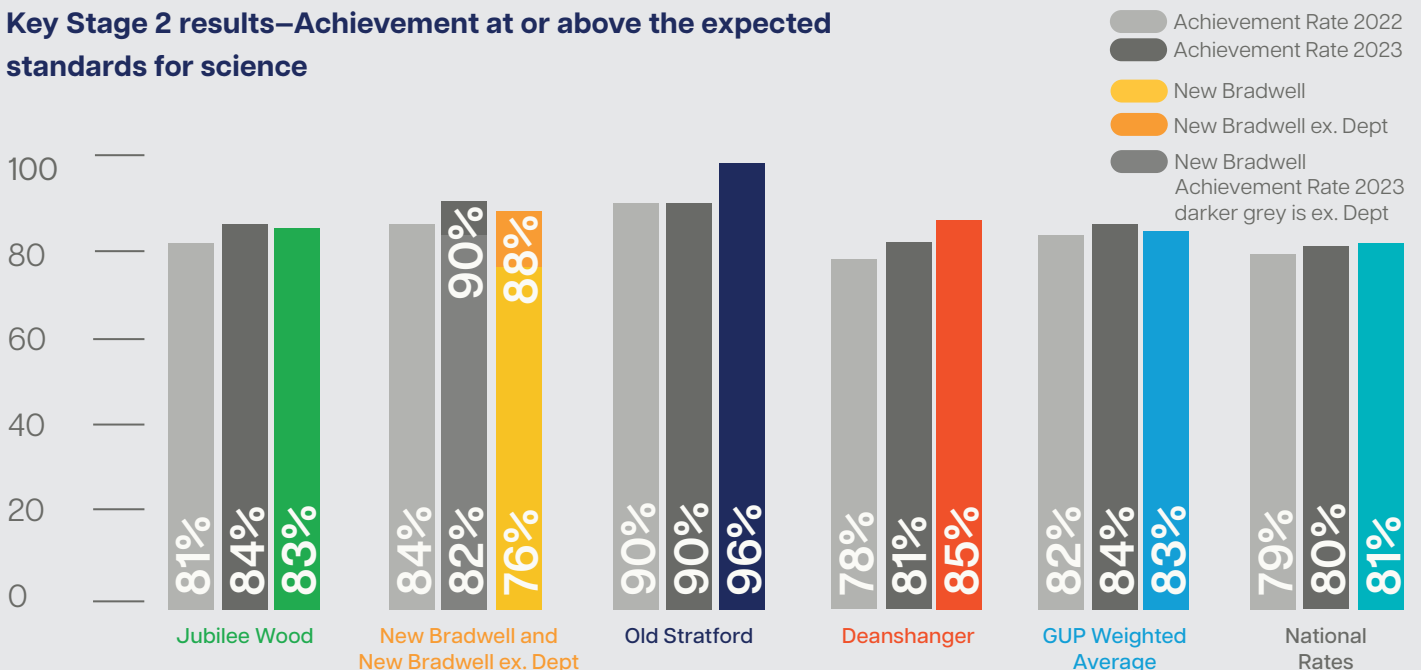


Key Stage Two

Key Stage 2 results—Achievement at or above the expected standards for grammar, punctuation and spelling



Key Stage 2 results—Achievement at or above the expected standards for science





Attainment in Foundation Subjects

All schools in the Trust completed End of Year Reports using the same platform in summer 2024. This has enabled us to publish data relating to attainment for foundation subjects for the first time. Whilst each school has a different approach to the curriculum in each subject, this data will provide an additional stimulus for ongoing conversations about standards being achieved across the wider curriculum at each school. When teachers make end of year judgements about the standards that a child may have achieved linked to the intended curriculum they can select from the following options—well above, above, within, below or well below. Rather than providing data for individual year groups the charts on the following pages show the proportion of children across Key Stage 1 (including year 1 and 2 children) and Key Stage 2 (including year 3, 4, 5 and 6 children) who were at least secure (assessed as within, above or well above) with respect to the targeted knowledge and skills for that subject. These outcomes are not subject to the

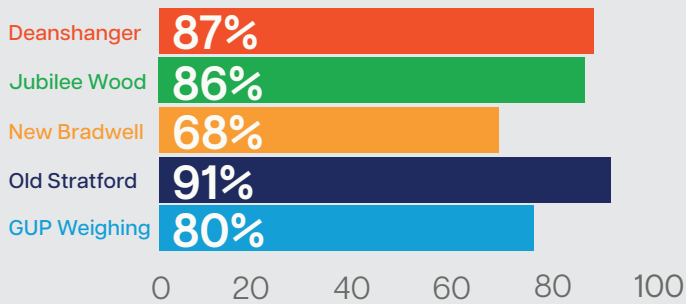
same kind of moderation as other data sets included in this document and there is not an expectation that they should be. The data does though provide a useful reference for subject leaders, school leaders and the central Trust team to explore how each school arrives at judgements about how well children are developing the intended knowledge and skills associated with the wider curriculum at each school. Subject and school leaders will be able to explore this data in greater detail in September 2024. All of the schools in the Trust will have actions within their development plans for the coming year linked to reviewing and refining approaches to assessment and feedback within the foundation subjects they deliver. This development work will seek to promote the progress that children make through the curriculum for each subject in ways that are impactful whilst supporting leaders and teachers to consider staff workload and avoid assessment and feedback activities that don't actively make a difference for children.

Attainment in Four

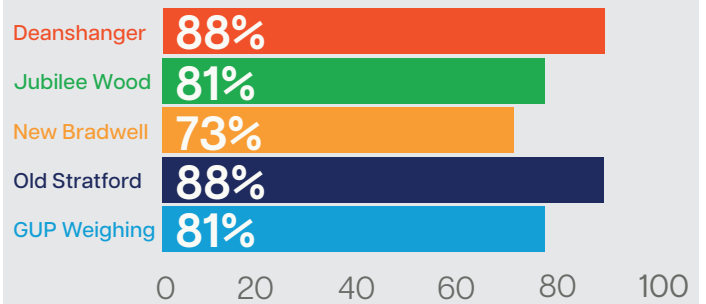
The charts in this section show the proportion of children across Key Stage 1 (including year 1 and 2 children) and Key Stage 2 (including year 3, 4, 5 and 6 children) who were at least secure (assessed as within, above or well above) with respect to the targeted knowledge and skills for that subject.

These outcomes are not subject to the same kind of moderation as other data sets included in this document and there is not an expectation that they should be.

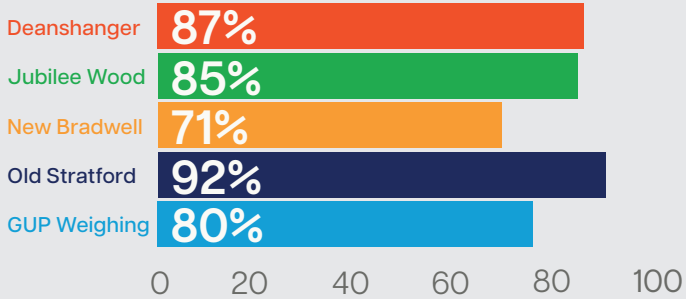
Key Stage 1 History Attainment



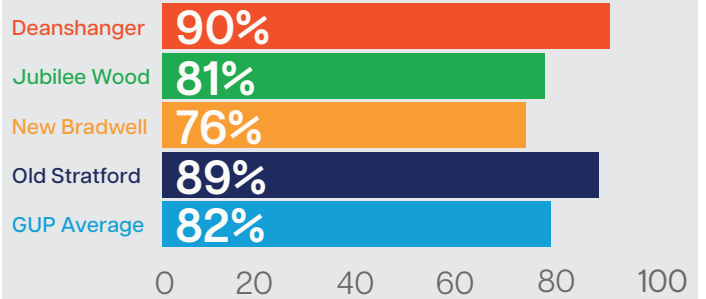
Key Stage 2 History Attainment



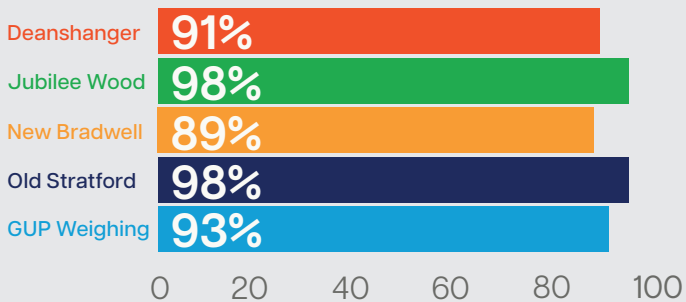
Key Stage 1 Geography Attainment



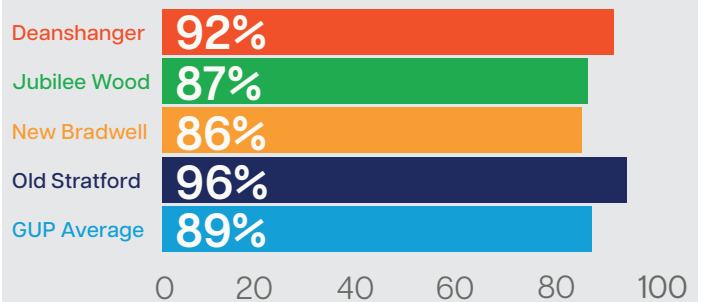
Key Stage 2 Geography Attainment



Key Stage 1 Art & Design Attainment



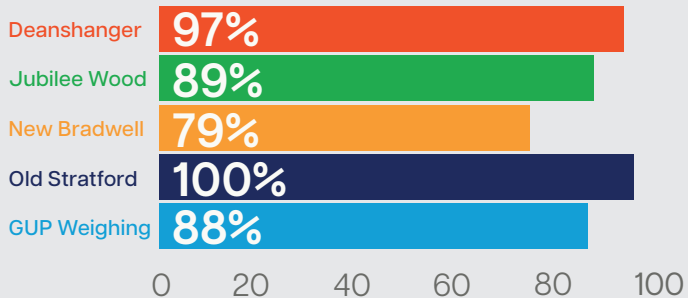
Key Stage 2 Art & Design Attainment



Foundation Subjects

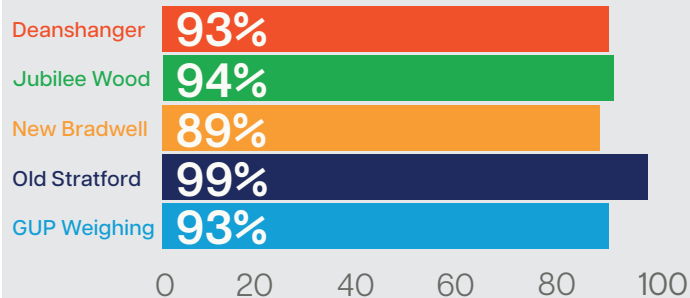
Key Stage 1

Music Attainment



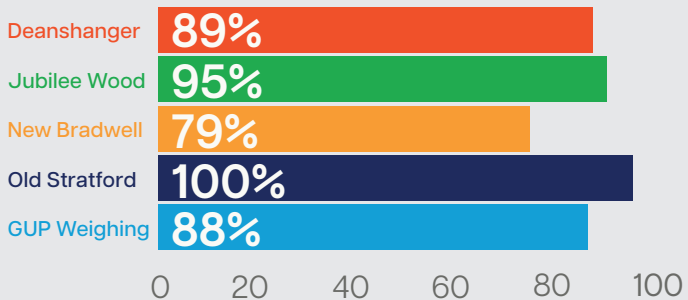
Key Stage 2

Music Attainment



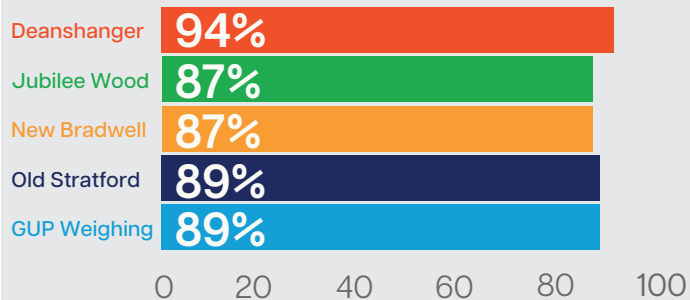
Key Stage 1

Computing Attainment



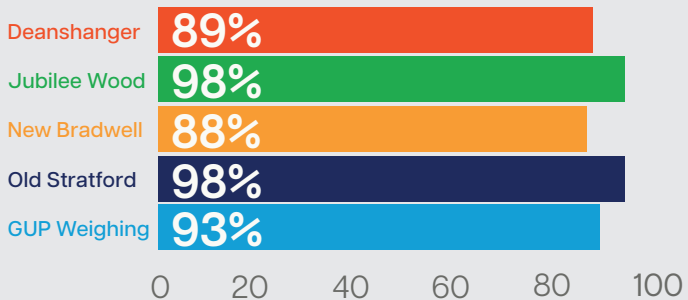
Key Stage 2

Computing Attainment



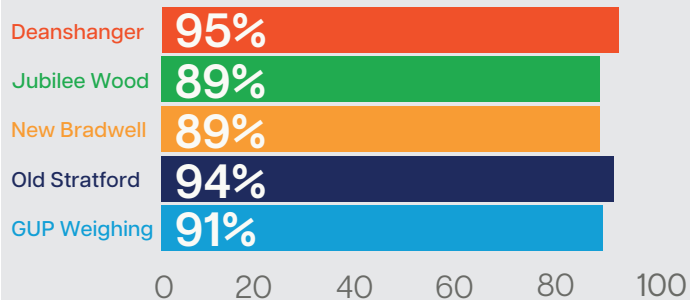
Key Stage 1

Design & Technology Attainment



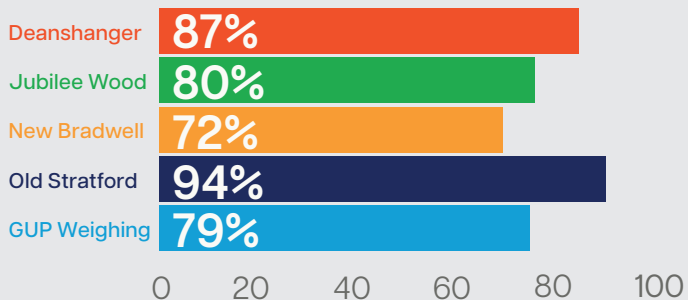
Key Stage 2

Design & Technology Attainment



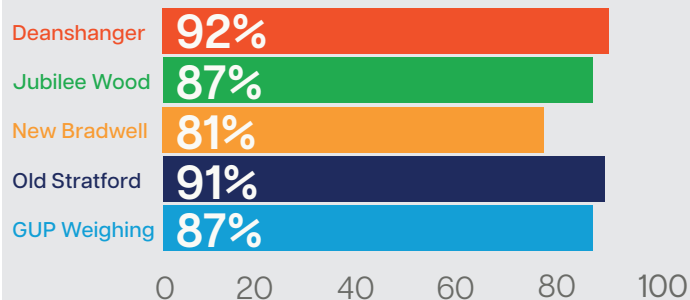
Key Stage 1

Religious Education Attainment



Key Stage 2

Religious Education Attainment

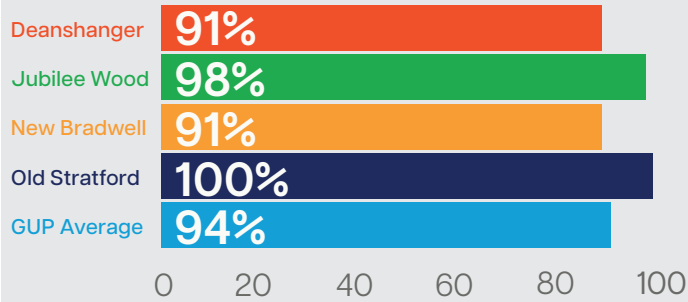




Attainment in Foundation Subjects

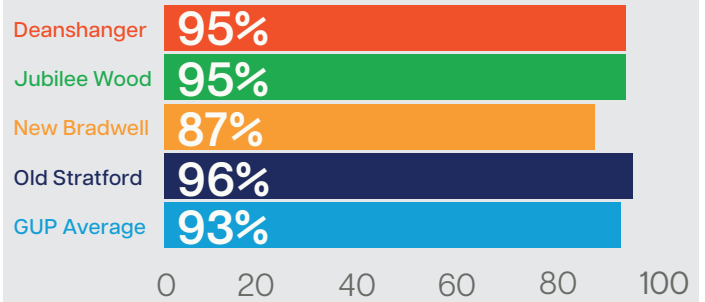
Key Stage 1

PSHE Attainment



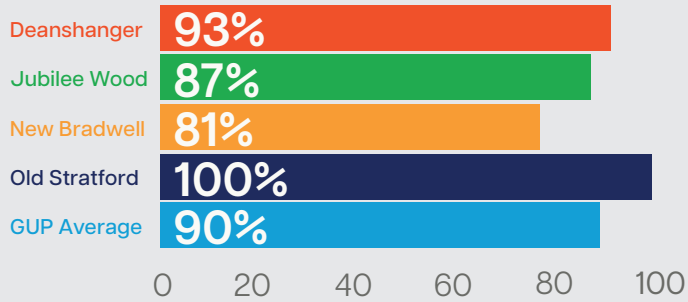
Key Stage 2

PSHE Attainment



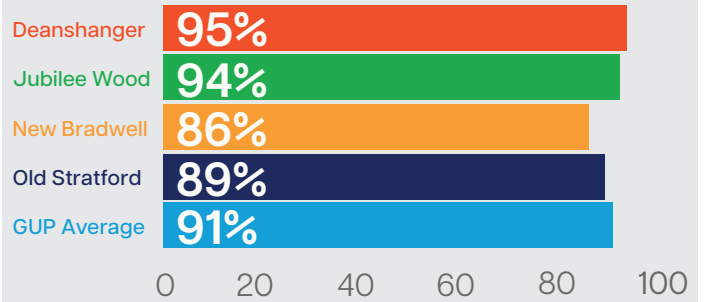
Key Stage 1

Physical Education Attainment



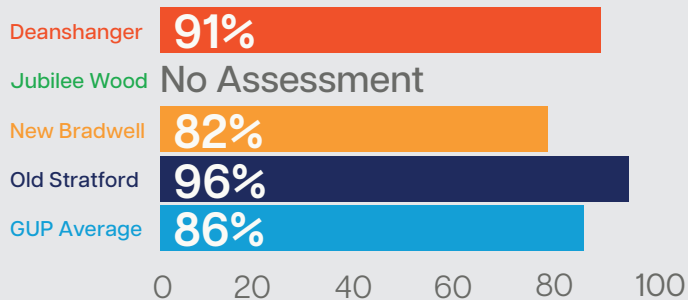
Key Stage 2

Physical Education Attainment



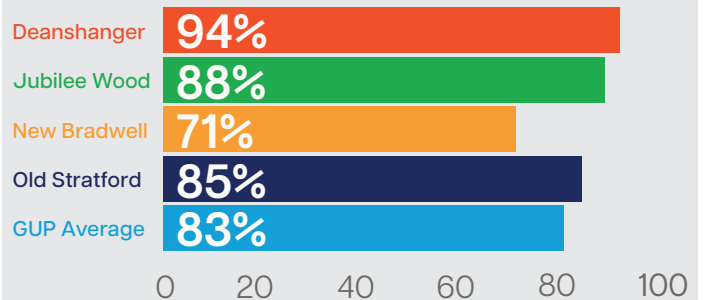
Key Stage 1

French Attainment



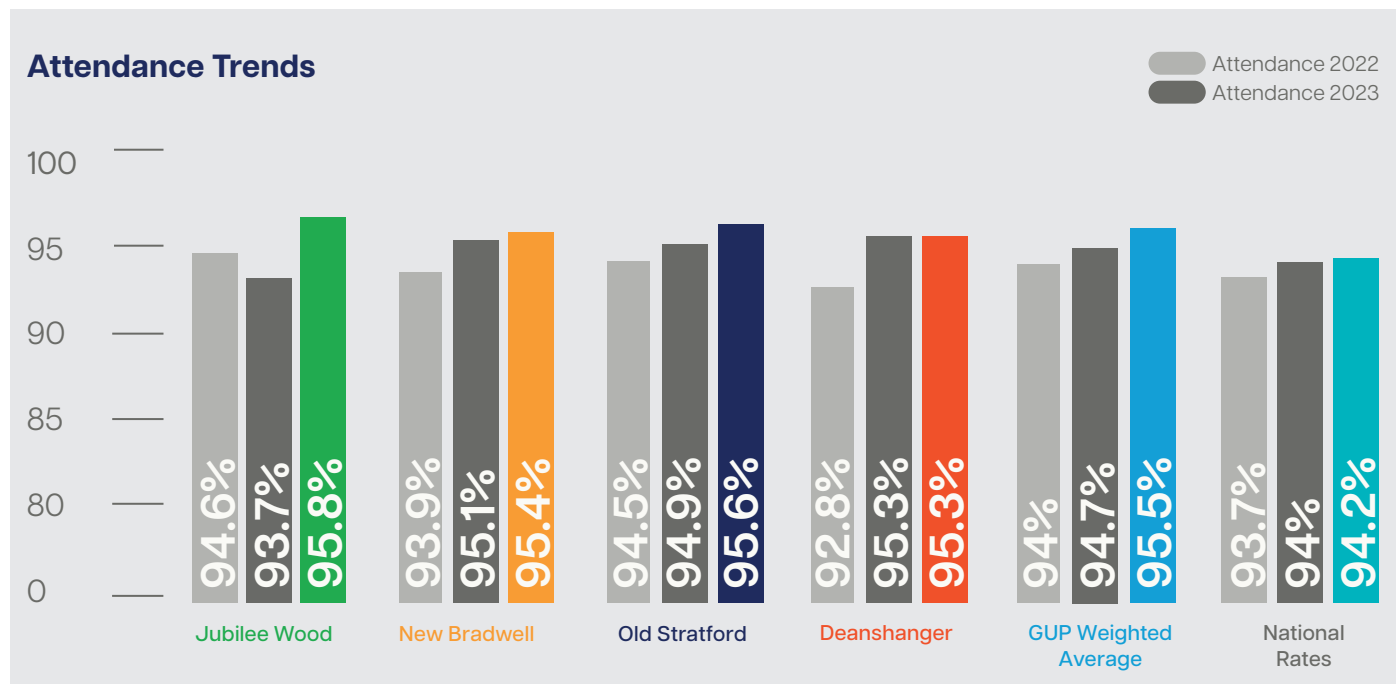
Key Stage 2

French Attainment

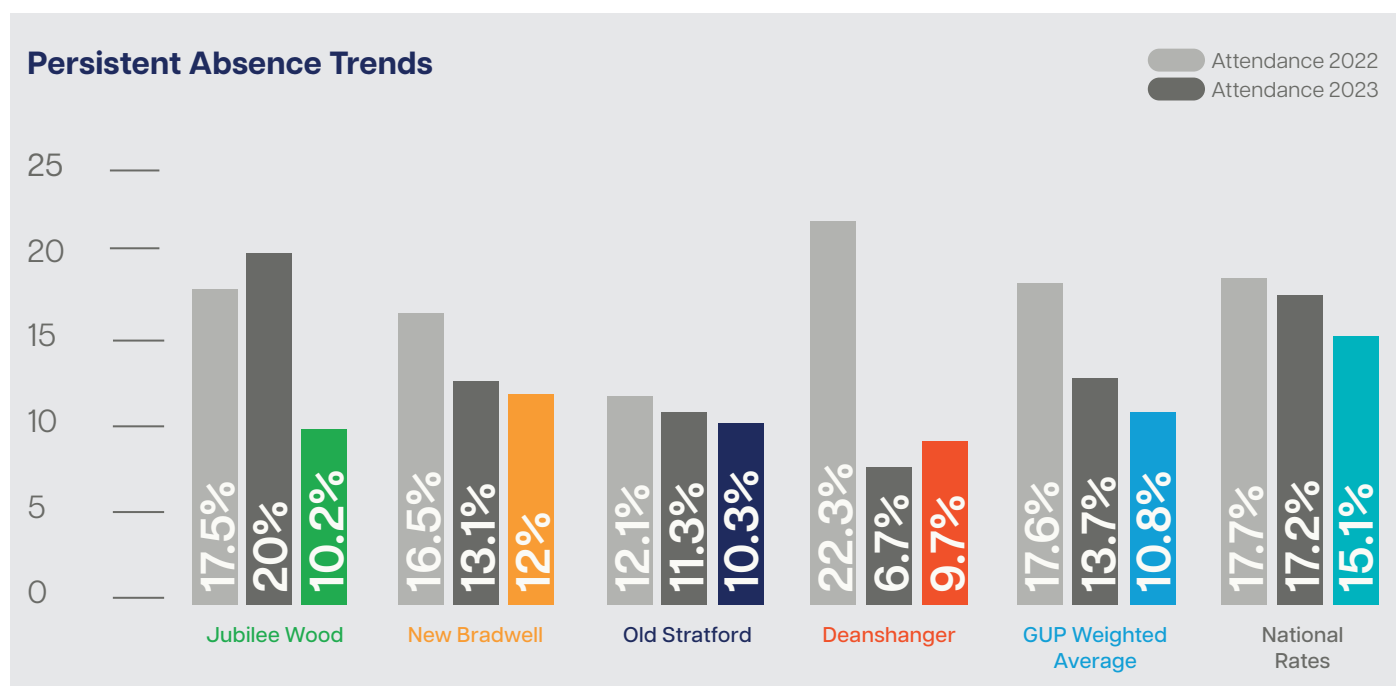


Pupil Attendance

Attendance rates across the Trust for 2023–24 continued to be consistently above the equivalent national rate for primary schools published by the DfE. Three of the four schools saw an improvement in attendance.



Persistent absence was lower than the national rate for all of the schools in the Trust. Three of the four schools saw a reduction in the level of persistent absence over the course of the year.



There is no complacency regarding the need to closely monitor and manage persistent absence, teams across the Trust have worked together very effectively to share their approaches and overall, this has delivered a positive impact and was reinforced by the findings linked to Internal Audit activity.





Stakeholder surveys



Surveys have been completed by pupils (in the autumn term), staff (in the spring term) and parents (in the summer term), across all schools in the Trust. Each survey incorporates standard statements that Ofsted use. Some additional statements have been included (particularly in relation to the staff survey) to explore staff perceptions of the Trust, as well as providing them with an opportunity to provide feedback regarding the school that they are based at. Each survey provides a helpful route into wider discussion of the themes covered and has prompted conversations that have contributed to improvements at both school and Trust level. In the spring term Trust leaders held focus groups with staff from each school to explore some of the key findings linked to the staff survey. The conversations with a range of teaching and support staff were very productive and equivalent opportunities

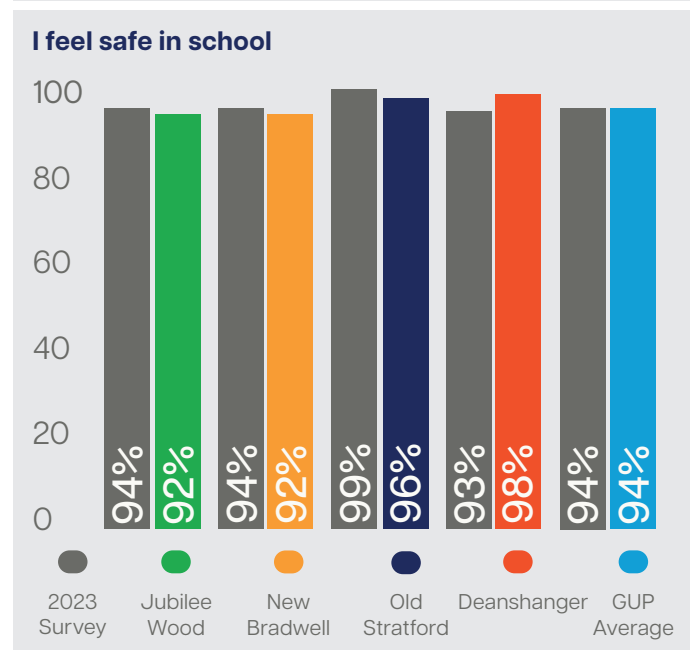
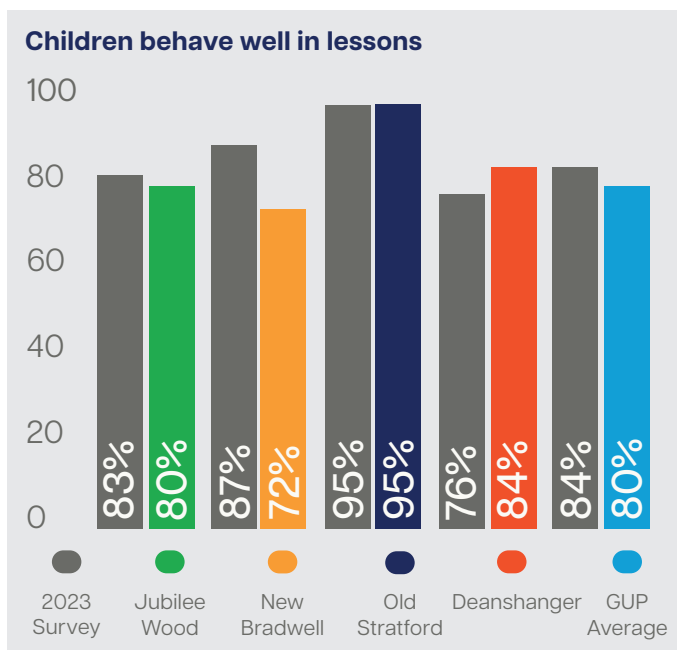
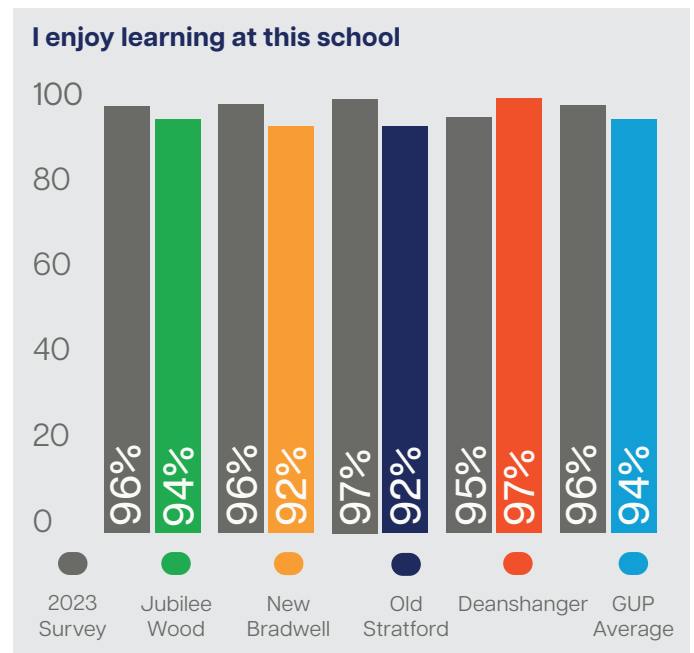
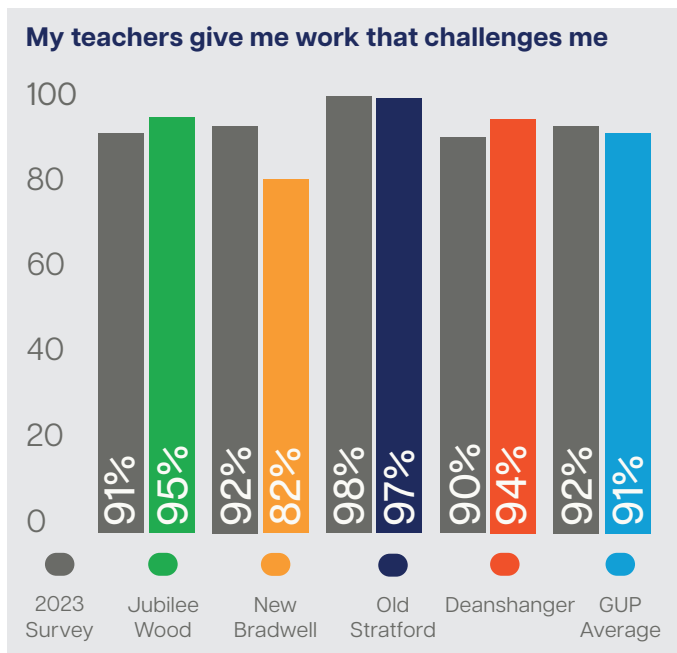
to talk with children and parents will be included within the calendar for 2024–25.

Survey outcomes clearly demonstrate that children across the Trust are enjoying their learning and experiencing a culture of high expectations that supports their learning. These findings are consistent with the extensive monitoring activities that take place at many different levels across the Trust. Subject leaders, school leaders and external reviewers consistently feedback that children are enjoying their learning and are being challenged to meet the high expectations that Trust and school leaders' champion. The series of charts included in this section focus in on survey statements that are strongly linked to the key judgements that Ofsted make regarding the quality of education, behaviour and attitudes, personal development and leadership and management.

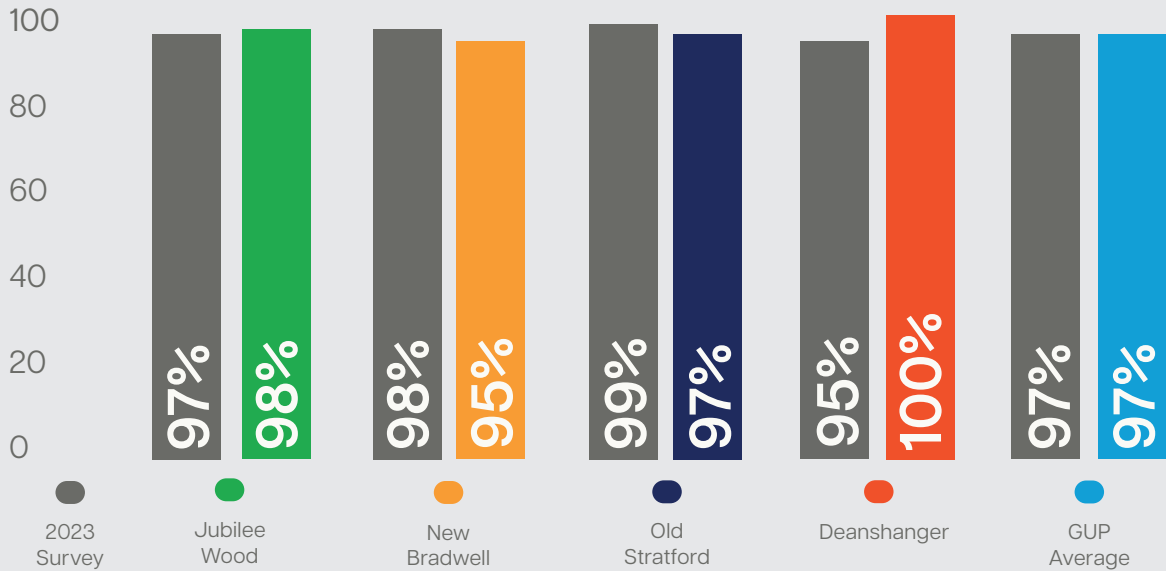
Pupil Survey

1,435 children completed the pupil survey in the autumn of 2023 (**538** from New Bradwell, **422** from Jubilee Wood, **172** from Old Stratford and **303** from Deanshanger). The survey has in previous years been paper based with form tutors overseeing the process. This year children at New Bradwell in Key Stage 2 piloted the use of MS Forms to complete the survey within their Computing classes. Whilst this approach was worth piloting it had a negative impact on the outcomes of the survey at New Bradwell and skewed the Trust averages. For Jubilee Wood, Deanshanger and Old Stratford outcomes were broadly in line with outcomes from previous years. In 2024–25 all children will follow the paper-based approach.

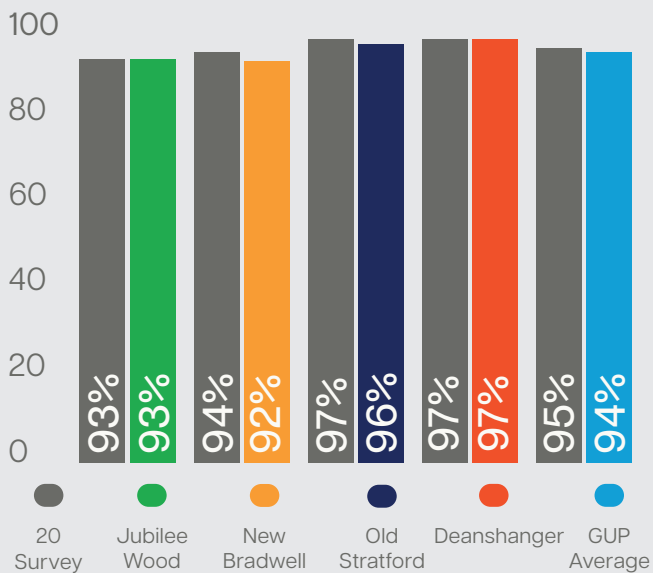
Each of the charts in this section show the proportion of children who selected either ‘Strongly Agree’ or ‘Agree’ options within the survey.



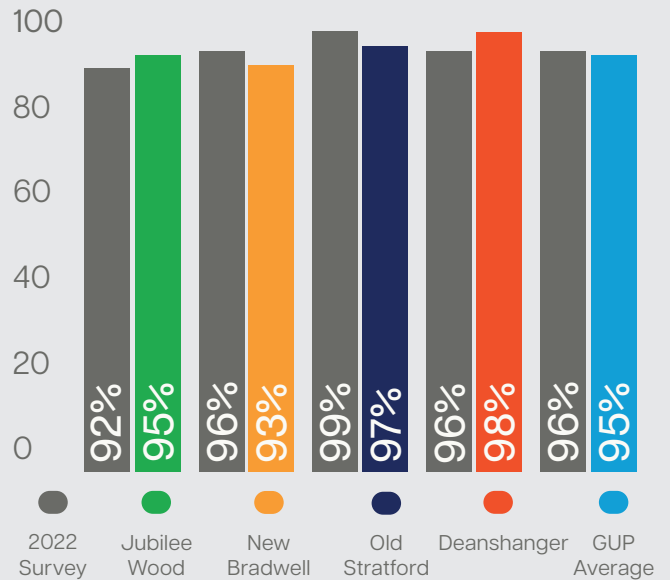
My teachers help me develop the knowledge and the skills I need to succeed in the future



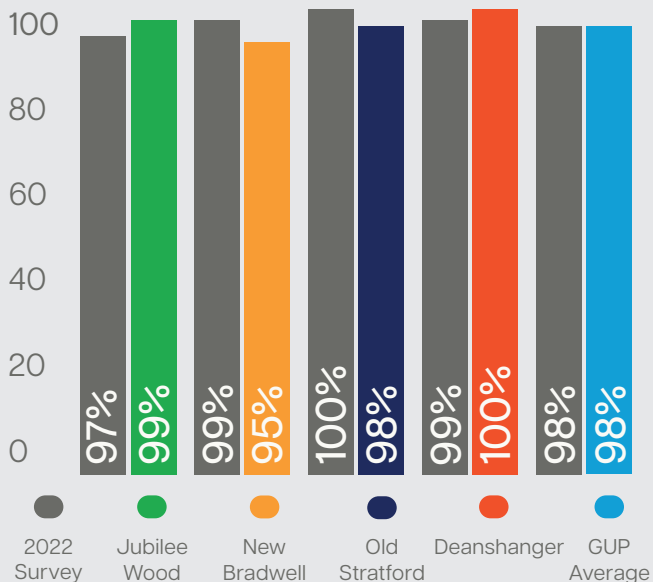
There is an adult in school I can talk to if something is worrying me



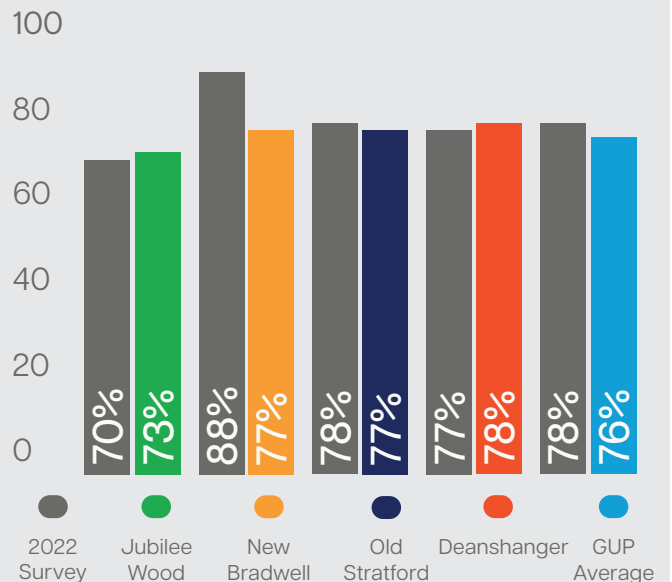
My school helps me to look after my health (for example healthy eating and fitness)



My school helps me to respect people from other backgrounds and to treat everyone equally



I take part in school activities outside of lessons, like clubs, sports, music and art



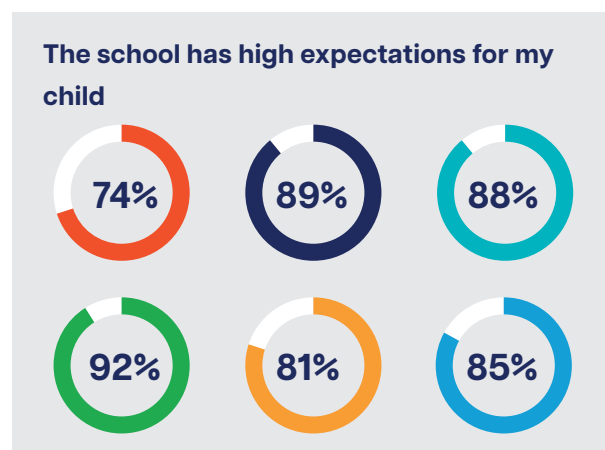
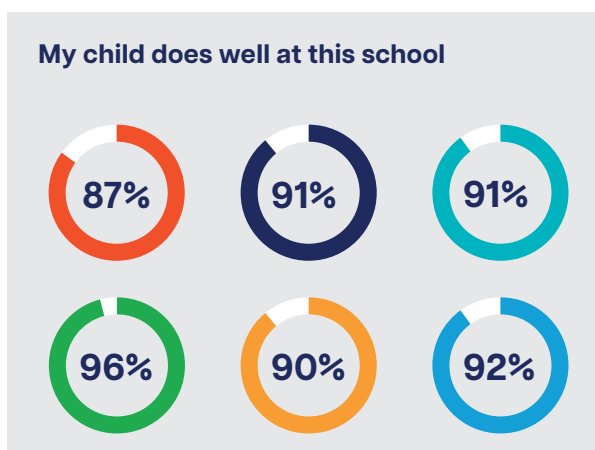
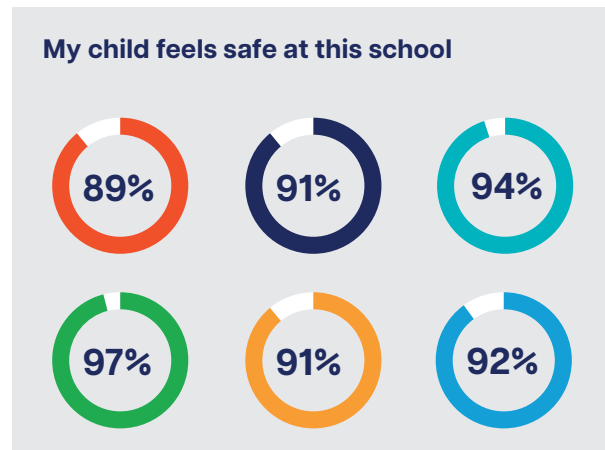
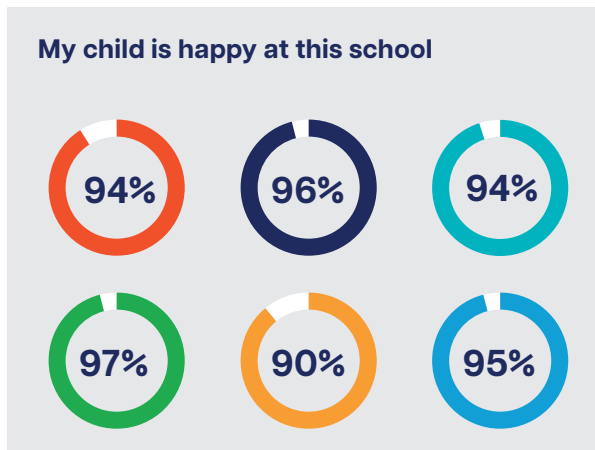
Parent survey

353 parents completed a survey in the summer term of 2024 (**67** from New Bradwell, **155** from Jubilee Wood, **46** from Old Stratford and **85** from Deanshanger). This year the survey was administered through MS Forms, in previous years Parent Mail has been used. The response rate was approximately half that achieved in the previous two years. The move to MS Forms was made because a number of schools no longer use Parent Mail, we will move to an alternative platform when the next parent survey is carried out.

Each of the charts in this section shows the proportion of parents who selected either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' options within the survey.

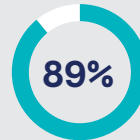
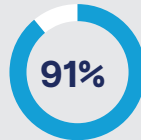
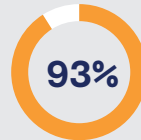
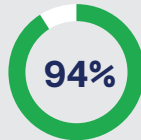
Parent Perceptions

Levels of Agreement with Parent Survey Statements

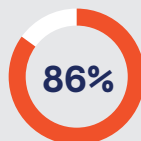
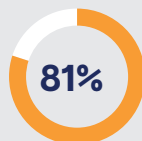
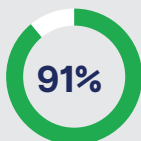
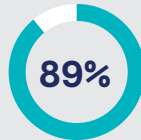
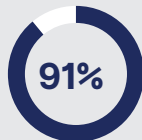




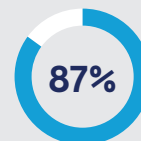
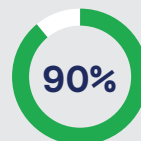
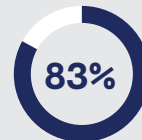
I would recommend this school to another parent



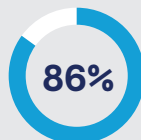
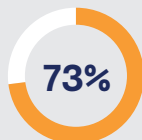
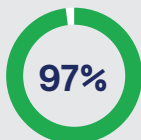
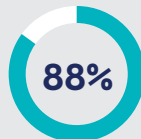
The school makes sure its pupils are well behaved



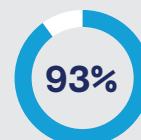
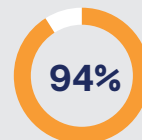
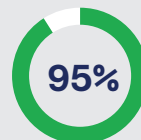
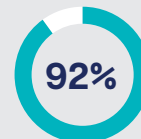
The school makes me aware of what my child will learn during the year



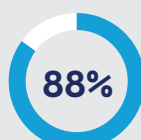
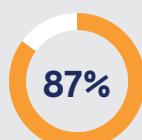
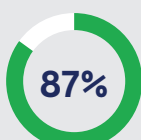
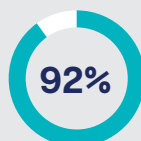
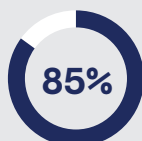
The school lets me know how my child is doing



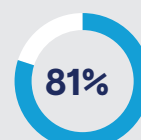
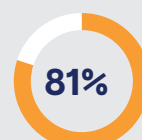
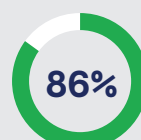
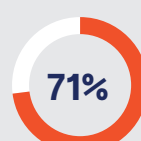
There is a good range of subjects available to my child at this school

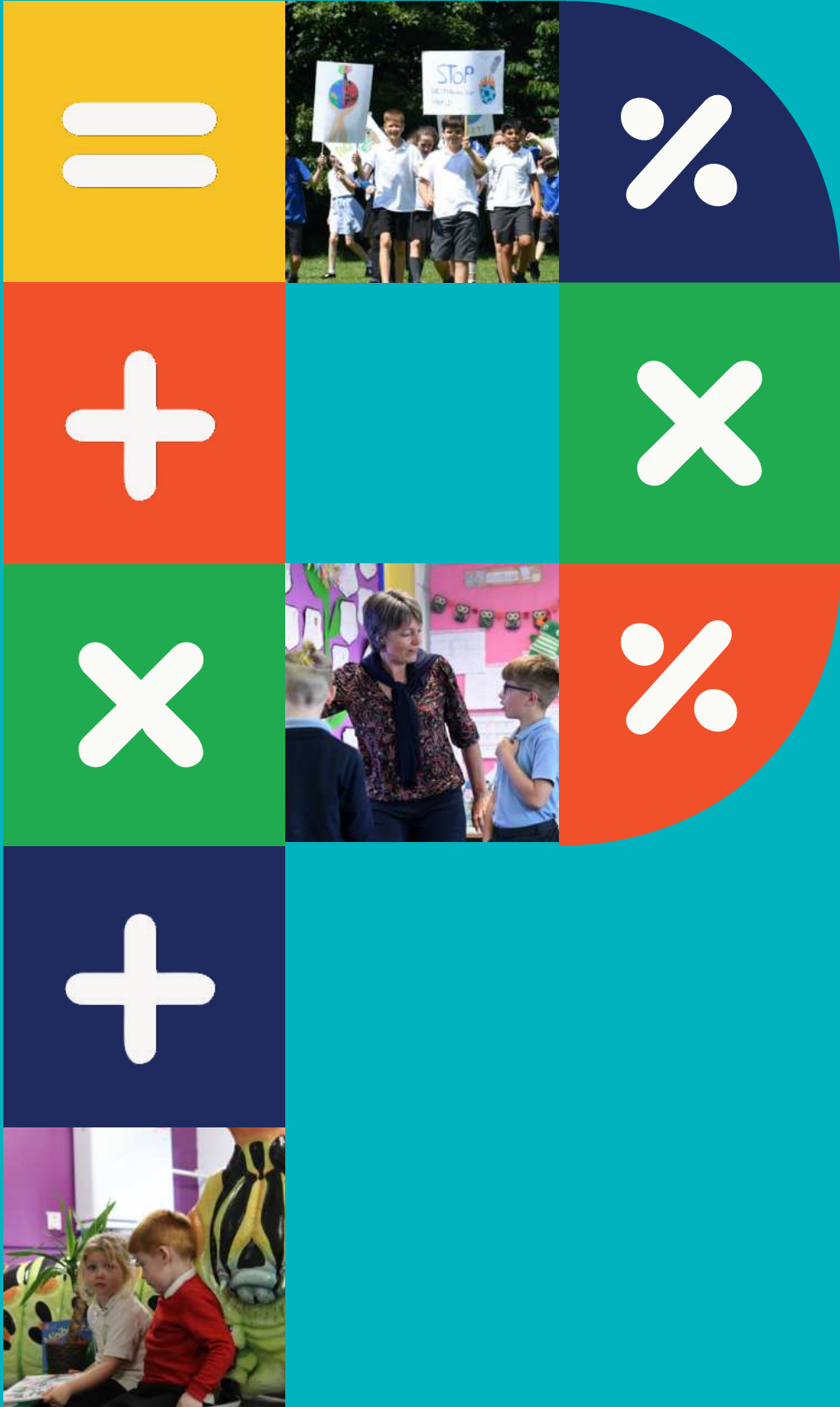


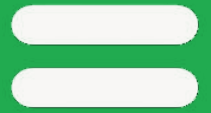
My child can take part in clubs and activities at this school



The school supports my child's wide personal development







2. School Improvement

In November 2023 a group of 50 staff from across the Trust met for the first subject network meeting. Subject leads from each school shared information about their approach to the design and delivery of the curriculum for their subject and their current development priorities. Following on from this initial activity projects that addressed shared priorities started to be scoped. There was a recognition that these projects would pilot ideas within a specific year group, promoting the practical exploration of improvement strategies in a sustainable way.

Examples of project themes for 2023-24 included:

- The exploration of current practice across all schools in the partnership in relation to the use of resources and the wider learning environment to promote a love of reading. This project also drew on research linked to the DfE Regional English Hub 'Reading for Pleasure Leadership Programme'.
- Joint development of Trust principles for assessing standards of writing for children in year 3. The intention with this project was to support Trust wide moderation activities to promote the transfer of good practice and building greater confidence when assessing

the standard of writing for year 3 children.

- A review of the different strategies being employed by teams to strengthen the ability of children to recall and apply knowledge regarding age-appropriate arithmetic. The aim of this project was to establish those strategies that deliver the most impact and explore aspects of teacher practice that support these strategies to work effectively.
- Subject Leads for Geography wanted to explore best practice linked to the use of field work. They reviewed Ofsted research findings, one member accessed external training and shared relevant resources with the rest of the group. Each school developed a deeper understanding of how field work fits with the curriculum at their school and developed next steps to take this forward within their context.

These subject networks have been valued by teachers, who have enjoyed the opportunity to share ideas, learn from each other and collaborate. At the summer term network meeting teachers fed back ideas for how these networks might continue to evolve, it will be exciting to see how things develop for these groups in 2024–25.

2. School Improvement



Over the course of 2023–24 Matt O'Brien, Headteacher at Jubilee Wood took on the role of Executive Headteacher at Tickford Park Primary School. Matt and members of the team at Jubilee Wood have supported a review of the timetable and the introduction of a new literacy curriculum for Key Stage 2 children. Two of the team at Jubilee Wood worked closely with colleagues at Tickford to support them to get to grips with the new curriculum, providing opportunities to observe practice at Jubilee Wood and access coaching back at Tickford. This support has contributed to significant improvements in Key Stage 2 outcomes for the children at Tickford Park Primary School. Based on their experiences of this support Governors at Tickford Park started to explore joining a trust in December 2023 and after a rigorous process that included 3 locally based trusts decided to join the Grand Union Partnership in March 2024. The school has now received an Academy Order and we hope that the school will formally join the partnership before the end of 2024.

Over the course of 2023–24 the Trust has continued to develop the school improvement frameworks that support schools to reflect upon and improve current practice. An overarching school improvement strategy was developed during the year, bringing together the key activities that underpin school improvement at the Trust. Assessment practice, particularly in relation to Foundation Subjects, is a key theme that schools in the Trust will be taking forward within their School Development Plans. A Trust monitoring activity explored the theme of assessment at each school, the feedback shared by staff was further reinforced

within the focus groups that followed the staff survey. Early in the autumn of 2024 Trust level principles for assessment within foundation subjects will be shared with teaching teams across all of the schools to inform school reviews of assessment, feedback and marking policies. Meetings with Deputy Headteachers across the Trust are informing the shape of these principles. There is a recognition that the need for accurate assessment and impactful feedback needs to be delivered through efficient working practices that are sustainable for teachers and not overly burdensome. The positive Ofsted inspection at New Bradwell that took place in December 2023 provided further evidence that the activities within the trust strategy provide an effective platform for school improvement.

Section 1 of this report provided examples of how each school has continued to develop aspects of the curriculum they deliver. Many of these examples demonstrate how our schools work together and learn from each other. This supports school improvement in ways that empower each school to own their improvement journey by blending ideas from inside and outside of the Trust. Whilst all schools share the same cycle for school improvement and the same expectations for the monitoring of school development they have the autonomy to plan their next steps in a way that is most suited to their journey. Similarly, schools across the Trust share the Grand Union Partnership curriculum principles and teaching standards to promote a common language for learning and shared aspirations for the curriculum—yet they are free to select how these will be secured within the context of the community they serve.



In addition to Tickford Park Primary School being on track to join the partnership later in 2024, two other local schools have submitted initial applications to join the Trust. By attending the monthly Headteacher meetings that take place, visiting each school in the partnership, talking with Trustees and local governors, both schools have started to get to know the Trust. Their feedback to us is that they like the collaborative ethos that we champion and how we do school improvement together.

- As the Trust moves closer to the current target of growing to include circa 2,500 children, Trustees will be reviewing the current strategy to consider how objectives for the next 3 to 5 years might evolve.
- A number of shared systems lay the foundations for school improvement across the schools in the Trust. For example through:
- The use of Arbor for student information, whether linked to

monitoring attendance and persistent absence or reviewing attainment and progress data linked to the three shared assessment milestones adopted by schools in the Trust.

- The use of SAGE at each school to manage and monitor finances also promotes consistent conversations about how resources are used to best affect to promote school improvement.
- Since September 2023 all schools in the Trust have been using MyConcern to record and monitor safeguarding concerns. The effective use of this platform alongside the regular consideration of the tracker used by all schools (based on the NSPCC self assessment tool) supports effective practice. Internal audits of both the management of pupil absence and wider safeguarding and child protection at each school pointed to much effective practice and a strong ethos linked to this key aspect of our schools.





3. Workforce Resilience and Wellbeing

As part of the Trust Health and Wellbeing Strategy all staff have access to an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). Staff at Deanshanger, New Bradwell, Old Stratford and Jubilee Wood have been able to access the 'Wisdom app' (produced by Health Assured), this provides a number of tools that promote health and wellbeing as well as the more traditional aspects of an EAP such as wider guidance, advice and counselling support across a range of themes.

A total of 150 staff (60% of staff across the Trust) completed a survey in January exploring a range of themes. The statements included were consistent with what was covered in the previous year. The charts in this section show the results for each school and the Trust and provide an indication of the trend over the last two years.

There continue to be further improvements in relation to staff perceptions of how staff are kept informed of Trust developments, their understanding of its wider vision and how each school benefits from being a part of the Grand Union Partnership. The introduction of the subject networks, termly newsletters, staff focus groups (following up on survey themes)

and the expansion of shared curriculum projects will have contributed to this. In 2024–25 there is a plan to bring Higher Level Teaching Assistants and Teaching Assistants who work 1 to 1 with children across the trust together.

There are not comparable national figures for all of the statements included in the survey; however, the Times Educational Supplement do run a staff wellbeing survey each year that includes three statements that are similar to those included in the Trust survey. The following statements and levels of agreement relate to the outcomes of this survey that included **6,600** responses:

- 20% of respondents agreed that my workload is manageable.
- 30% of respondents agreed that I feel supported at work.
- 52% of respondents agreed that I'm proud to work at my school.

This suggests that teacher morale across the Trust is very positive compared to the view that we have of the national picture.



- Half of the 28 statements included in the survey saw levels of agreement more than **3%** above the equivalent figure for the previous year. Many of these statements related to either perceptions of staff wellbeing or the understanding staff have of the work of the Grand Union Partnership and how this benefits them. Whilst these continue to be areas for further development it is encouraging to see that staff responses point to change and improvement in these areas. The other half of the statements saw levels of agreement within **3%** of the outcomes from last year.
- No statements dropped back by more than **3%**.

Staff were also provided with an opportunity to add anonymous 'free text' responses both for what they thought is working well at either school or Trust level and any areas for improvement at school or Trust level. The comments for each school have been shared with Local Governors and Trustees, Trust leaders explored relevant trends through follow up meetings with relevant groups of staff.

Staff focus groups

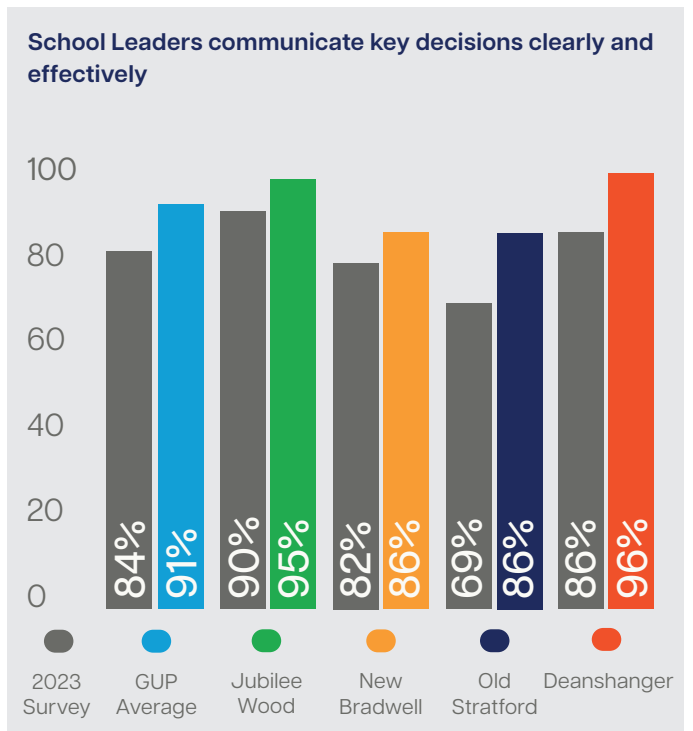
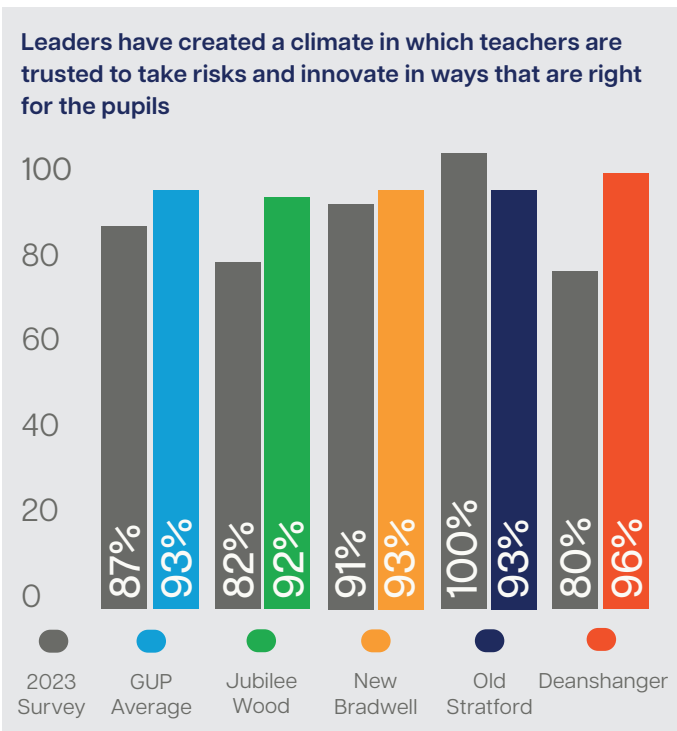
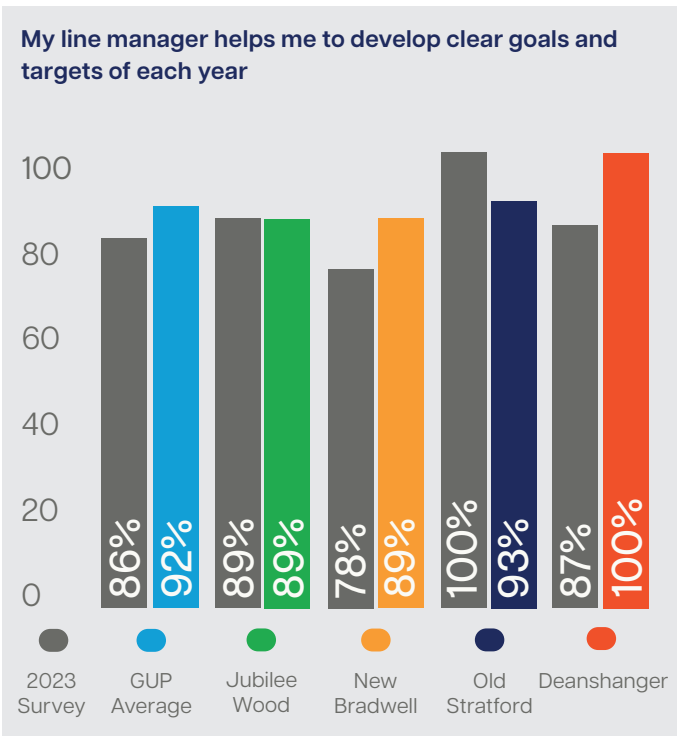
The addition of these meetings prompted some valuable discussions, a summary of key areas discussed is provided below:

- Staff at each of the schools spoke enthusiastically about the strong sense of team that they experience in their school. A number of staff articulated this sense of team being something that they felt about being part of the wider Trust too- this is clearly something that we wish to build further on.
- Workload was a theme that staff at a number of the schools in the Trust wanted to explore, within these discussion marking was the area that staff most wanted to talk about. There was a sense that staff are keen to make sure that the assessment and marking that they do is productive and drives progress for children. There was a sense in some schools that sometimes assessment and marking could be smarter.
- Staff were keen to access more opportunities to collaborate and learn from staff in other schools in the Trust. The idea of one of the training days being different at their school to the rest of the Trust could create a space for visiting the other schools in the future.

Each of the charts on the following pages show the proportion of staff who selected either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' options within the survey.



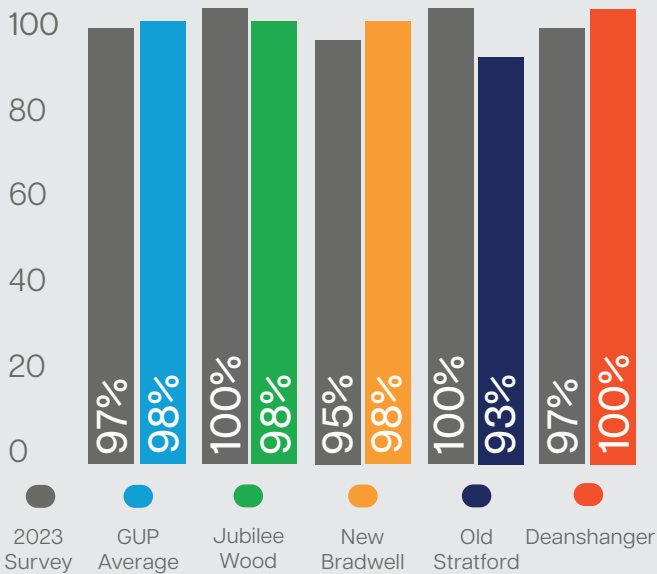
3. Workforce Resilience



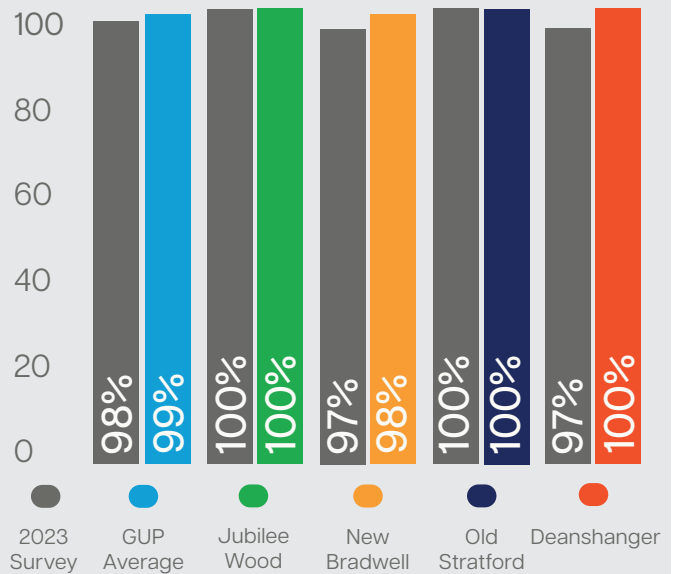


and Wellbeing

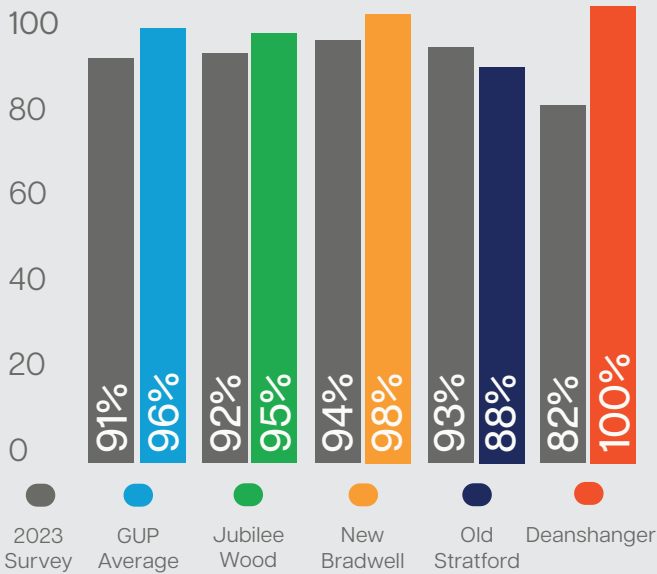
I know what the school is focused on achieving



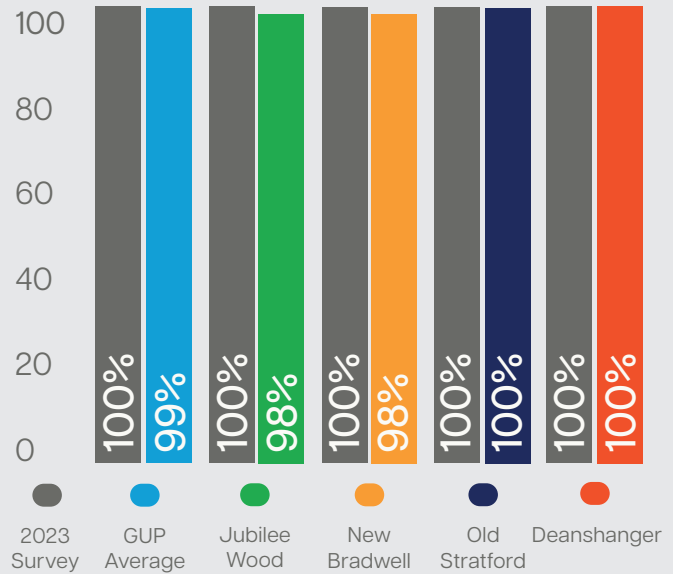
Pupils are safe at this school



The school is well led and managed

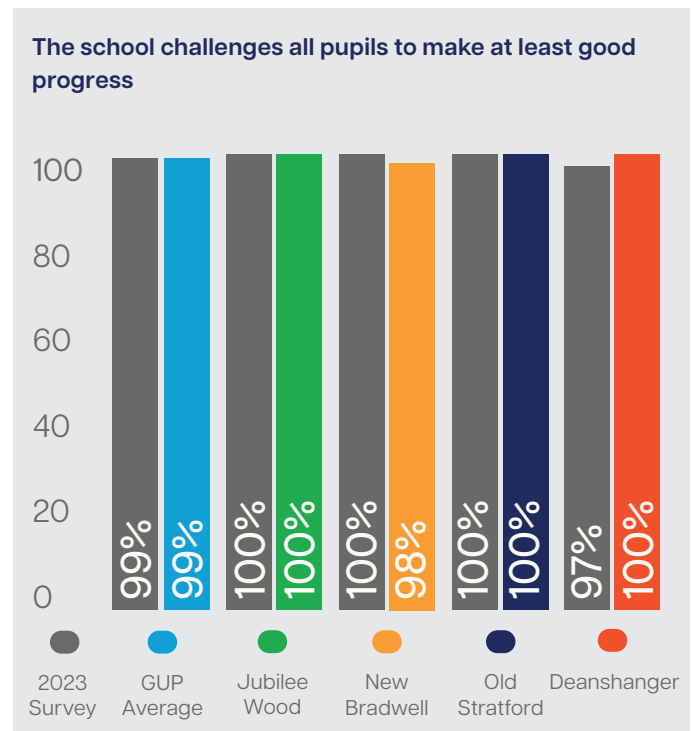
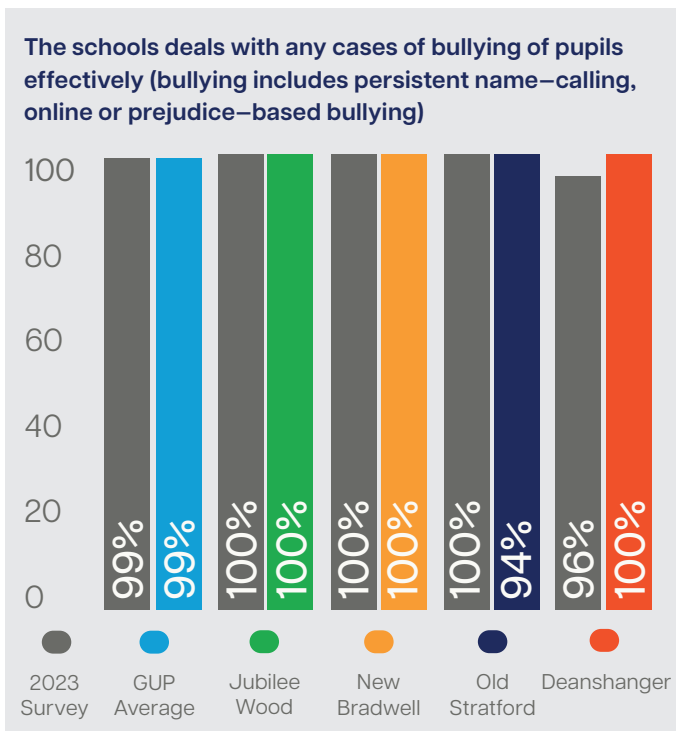
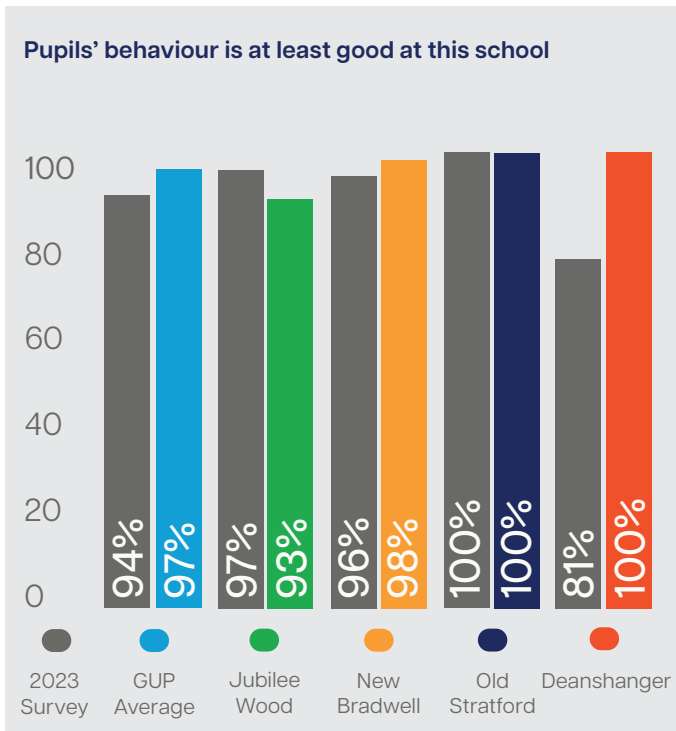


I know what to do if I have concerns about any pupil's safety or welfare



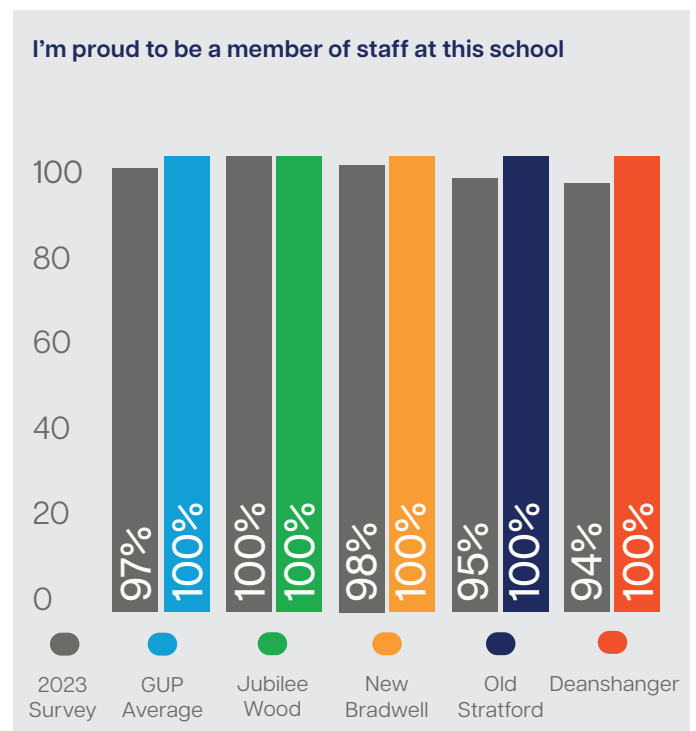
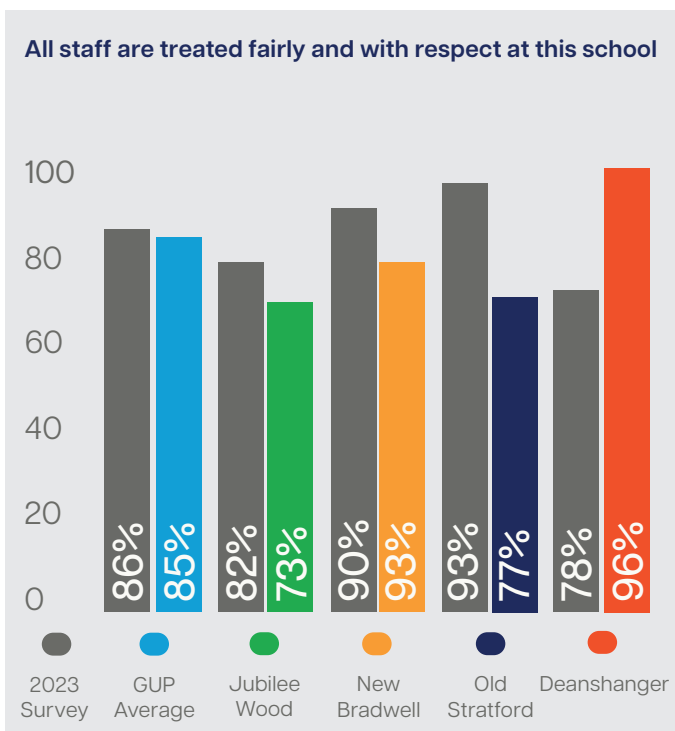
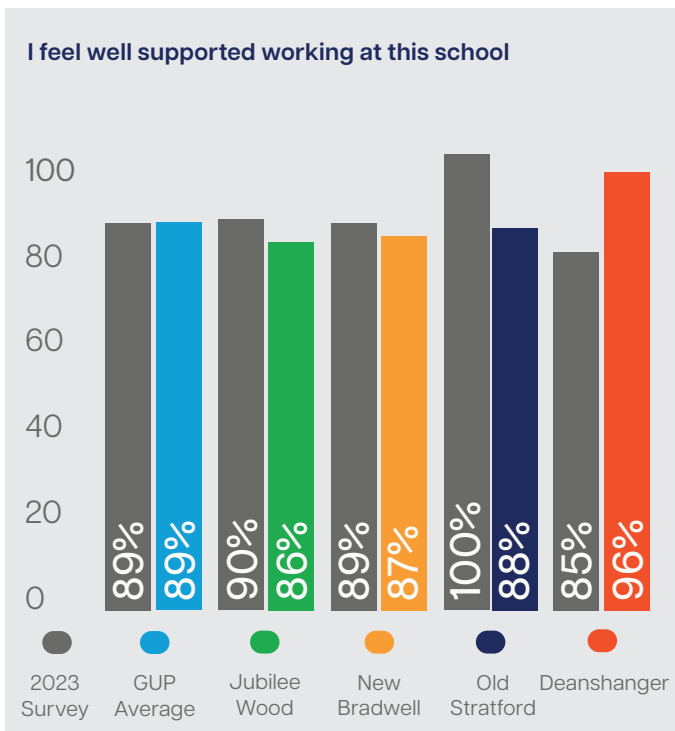


3. Workforce Resilience

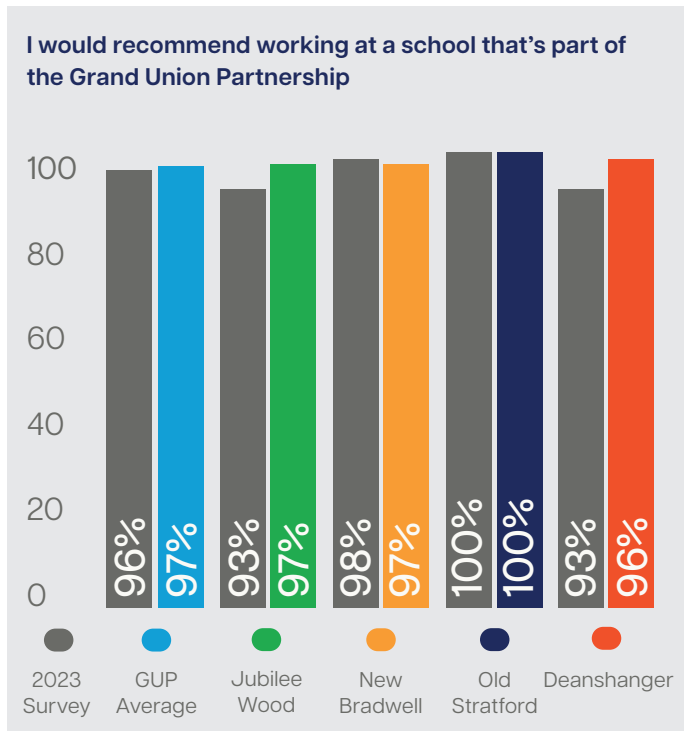
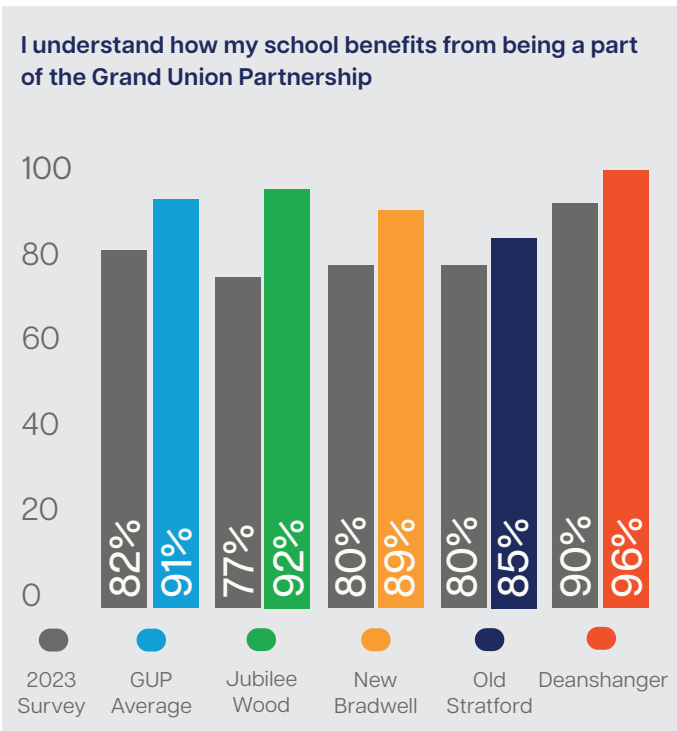
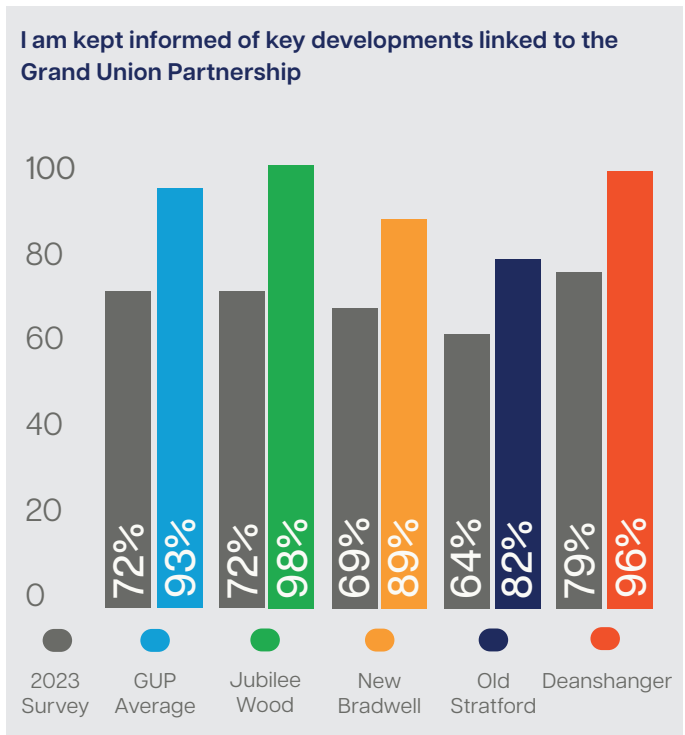
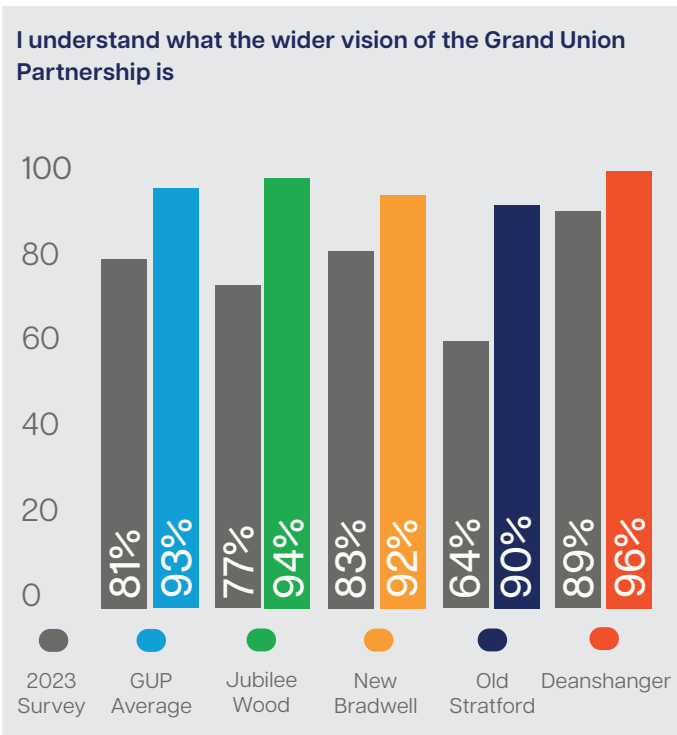




and Wellbeing



3. Workforce Resilience and Wellbeing





4. Finance and Operations

The central team continue to work with Headteachers at each school to review structures to promote efficient operations. There is a gradual movement towards centralisation that makes the most of naturally occurring changes to staffing structures. This approach supports efficiency gains, whilst also enabling new schools to integrate smoothly and effectively into the Trust. Over the course of 2023-24 the capacity of the central Trust finance team was strengthened.

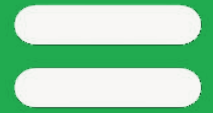
The central finance function undertakes a number of tasks that would traditionally have been picked up by individual school Business Managers. Examples include completing VAT returns, coordinating end of year pension certificates, budget preparation and the production of management accounts.

In the first quarter of 2024 the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) oversaw a smooth transition to a new payroll provider across the Trust, the improved quality of service provided by the new provider has been well worth the significant time that School Business Managers and the CFO invested in this process.

The central team are on hand to provide direct support as and when schools need this.

Central team appointments have only been considered when sufficient funding was secured through the 5% top slice of central funding that each school committed to in 2023–24 (compared to the current national average of 7%). Schools access a range of services in return for this top slice, including:

- Regular support with school improvement from the CEO and Head of Development that supports each school with both quality assurance and improvement measures. This can involve monitoring activities that explore cross Trust themes as well as day-to-day support for Headteachers and their teams. These activities support benchmarking across the Trust and provide opportunities for good practice linked to individual schools to be shared and transferred across the Trust
- A suite of core IT systems that each school in the Trust uses such as Arbor, EduKey, My Concern and SAGE. These cover a diverse range of functions relating to student records and performance, the effective administration of SEND arrangements and the management of school finances.



4. Finance and Operations

- A range of professional services that school leaders and local governors benefit from such as access to a Policy Management system that supports policy development and administration, internal and external audit activities, the provision of Clerking services for each school, access to GovernorHub and training for governors through access to National Governors Association modules and bespoke training from the Trust Governance Professional and central Trust team members.
- Central coordination of Condition Improvement Funding bids that enable each school to apply for significant funding towards capital projects. Over the course of 2023–24 and 2024–25 the Trust has secured circa £6 million for improvement projects that have included:
 - Replacing the majority of windows across New Bradwell (2023–24) and fire safety and electrical improvements (2024–25)
 - Replacement boilers and fire safety, water and electrical improvements at Deanshanger (2023–24 and 2024–25)
 - Replacement boilers and fire safety improvements at Jubilee Wood (2024–25)

Schools benefit from working together to secure better value for money when negotiating goods and services. For example, site managers with the Central Facilities Manager negotiate preferential rates with service contractors.

Our Chief Financial Officer works with Business Managers to support budgeting and audit activities. The charts that follow demonstrate where each school in the Trust is currently positioned in relation to a number of key ratios. The Trust recognises that each school operates in a different context but is committed to supporting school leaders across the trust to learn from each other and take a proactive approach to securing school improvement in a way that demonstrates value for money.

Over the summer of 2024 the Trust is working with a Schools Resource Management Adviser who will be producing a report that will be shared with the ESFA and Trustees regarding current approaches to resource management across the Trust. This will provide useful feedback and recommendations for us to consider that will support both further process improvement and enable the Trust to take further actions that will help it to manage its expansion effectively.

The data tables that follow relate to the audited financial statements submitted by the Trust for 2022–23. Where relevant national benchmarking data is available it has been included. The staffing data linked to New Bradwell includes the Department for 24 children with Autistic Spectrum Conditions, all with EHCPs, this provision has a significant impact on the staffing ratios for the school.

Teaching and Teaching Support Costs (cost per pupil)



Teaching Staff (cost per pupil)



Education Support Staff (cost per pupil)



Admin and Clerical Supplies (cost per pupil)



Educational Supplies (cost per pupil)



Premises Staff and Services (cost per m²)



Catering Staff and Services (cost per pupil)



Admin Supplies (cost per pupil)



Utilities



All percentage figures in blue refer to the % of school income spent on the stated item of expenditure.



5. Expert Governance

During the autumn and spring terms of 2023–24 the Trust commissioned an External Review of Governance. The review was based broadly on the Confederation of School Trusts (CST) Governance Assurance Framework and identified a number of strengths and areas for development. A summary of strengths and those areas for development that will be taken forward in 2024–25 is provided below:

Strengths

Board Leadership

- The vision, mission, ethos and values were developed with the Trust Board and other governance stakeholders. They are clearly articulated and drive strategic planning. The Trust ethos and understanding of charitable purposes are tangible and embedded across the Board's work.
- Stakeholder surveys are used widely with findings used to inform the Board's decision-making.
- There has been considerable investment in People development and a Health & Wellbeing Strategy.
- Civic and community responsibilities are recognised with support provided to schools and organisations outside the Trust.
- Equality and inclusion are embedded at all levels of work.
- The Chair is respected and leads with integrity. Relationships are positive across the Trust.

- There is an independent Governance Professional who provides valued advice and guidance.
- Trustees bring a wide range of professional expertise including education.

Structures

- There is significant separation between the layers of governance and no overlap between Members and Trustees.
- The Terms of Reference and Scheme of Delegation are reviewed annually and there is meaningful delegation to the LACs.
- Communication to LACs is supported by Chairs' agenda planning meetings.
- Diversity data is collected and held at Trust level.

Accountability

- Trustees deliver strong accountability in terms of educational improvement. They provide robust support and challenge and there is clear evidence that the school improvement strategy delivers when there have been performance issues.
- Trust level reporting has been implemented for education reporting.
- There is strength in external and internal monitoring that includes 'deep dives' and informs triangulation.
- Curriculum Principles are clearly articulated and understood across the Trust.



- There is evidence that Trustees understand their fiduciary duty; systems are in place to support effective financial governance.
- There is evidence in documentation and minutes that Trustees seek best value and challenge appropriately, scrutinising sustainability of spending decisions.
- Consideration is being given to the use of Integrated Curriculum Financial Planning
- External audit provided a clean audit report and identified only one management action.
- Benchmarking is used to inform decision-making.
- There is a comprehensive Risk Management Policy. Ongoing development is taking place to improve risk processes.
- The Board agrees a programme for Internal Scrutiny and reviews the findings, taking action as needed.
- There is an effective business cycle/annual agenda plan and papers for meetings are circulated in good time.
- An external advisor is used to support CEO performance management.

Compliance

- Trustees understand the legal status of the Trust and the need to act in accordance with the Funding Agreement, Articles and Academy Trust Handbook. New Articles were adopted in 2021.
- Required information at Companies House and Get Information About Schools is up to date and well maintained. Returns to the ESFA are up to date.
- Safeguarding and SEND compliance and monitoring are strengths. There are link Trustees and Trackers have been introduced for monitoring. MyConcern has been introduced across the Trust.
- There is an Estates Strategy and a Health & Safety Trustee is appointed.

Areas for development to take forward in 2024–25

Board Leadership

- Trustees should develop succession plans across all levels of governance and senior leadership.

Structures

- Provide training on the role and responsibilities of Members.
- Terms of Reference and Schemes of Delegation should be reviewed by Trustees and the Governance Professional to ensure consistency and reflect the Trust status and divisions of responsibility.
- Policies should be incorporated into the Scheme of Delegation.

Accountability

- Continue the work to develop risk management processes and ensure that risk drives business agendas and the programme of Internal Scrutiny.

Over the course of 2023–24 a number of Trustees and Local Governors completed terms of office or have taken the decision to move on. We have also seen a number of new Trustees and Local Governors join either the Trust Board or Local Academy Committees. These are all voluntary roles and we are very fortunate that so many people across the local area are willing to contribute to governance at both Trust and school level.

We would like to offer our thanks to all those who have been part of a great team of volunteers in these roles and across 2023–24 have provided the healthy challenge and support that Trust and school leaders and wider staff need to keep our focus on putting children first.





Our values



Ambition

Our ambition focuses on enabling every child in our schools to make great progress. It is this ambition that fires our enthusiasm, stimulates ideas and gives us the momentum to deliver continuous improvement across the trust. This also drives our engagement with teacher and wider staff training and development. We hold uncompromisingly high expectations for how our staff bring out the best in the children they teach and in each other.



Audacity

Being a great learner and leading great learning involves the ability to step out of our comfort zone, take a risk, and recognise and embrace the need to be prepared to fail before we succeed. This encompasses a willingness to take the plunge, to speculate, to inquire, to imagine, to doubt and to explore. We believe that the ability to take risks, when done in a way that is consistent with our other values, better equips us to achieve our mission.



Integrity

Our reputation flows as much from how we work together and value each other as it does from the outcomes that we achieve. Working together with trust, transparency, honesty and respect enables us to create a safe space for leaders, staff teams and children to be audacious, try new things, learn from their mistakes and go again. Operating with integrity is fundamental. By recognising the richness that it brings to the culture of each school, integrity ensures that we are inclusive and that we value and celebrate diversity.

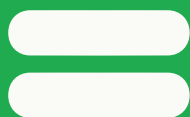


Perseverance

The will to succeed - the courage to carry on in the face of challenges because the goal that we aspire to is so worthwhile - is also critical. Grit, determination and resilience enable us to keep going beyond initial efforts that may not have succeeded. As leaders and teachers model this and school curriculums work to promote it, children across the trust will be able to demonstrate how they are developing this key trait.



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