



# **Building Culture Across a MAT: *Principles for Professional Learning***

Sam Gibbs, Curriculum & Development Lead



# Our Context



**The East Manchester Academy**  
A member of Greater Manchester Education Trust



Alexandra Park Primary School  
*"Care, Aspire, Achieve"*



**Together, we create lives of opportunity**

# Purpose



**Our goal is to create great schools where  
young people and colleagues flourish.  
*Together, we create lives of opportunity.***

# Frameworks



## Growing Great People

Together, we create lives of opportunity

**Our Commitment:** We will provide a high-quality, evidence-informed, fully coherent GMET development pathway for all staff in our organisation. We will collaborate and work in partnership with values-aligned external providers, networks and other schools and MATs, to enrich our professional development offer for staff and to contribute to system-led improvement.

### Vision

We develop **great people** to deliver **excellence** for our diverse community of students, so that every child can achieve highly regardless of background or barriers to learning.

We provide **great learning opportunities** which are evidence-informed, relevant to role, subject and context, and meet individual, school and Trust need. As a result, **great teaching** raises student outcomes and we tackle educational inequality.

High quality professional development enables everyone to be as good as they can be at what they do and how they do it. We place professional learning at the heart of school improvement by mobilising for every staff member the **best available evidence** from research and supporting them to implement it meaningfully in their contexts.

Our goal is to create **great schools** where young people and staff flourish.

We drive **continuous improvement** by providing resources and expertise, and positively influencing **culture** in which staff work and professional place, so that everyone can develop their practice and improve throughout their career.

### Aims

To develop **great people** in our schools, by ensuring they gain and continue to develop the knowledge and skills needed to deliver excellent outcomes for pupils.

To provide **high-quality professional pathways** for a great career in our organisation.

To develop an evidence-informed framework for the design, delivery and auditing of high quality CPD, based on the best available research, which supports schools to provide **coherent, contextualised programs** for staff.

To utilise **digital technologies** which can be accessed on demand to enhance provision.

To facilitate **collaboration** networks, systems and structures to share good practice and drive Trust-wide improvement.

To **build capacity** for staff development through providing expertise and support to schools and individual staff members.

### Guiding Principles

All colleagues have the capacity to **excel** and to continually **improve** upon their practice.

Professional development is both an **entitlement** and a responsibility. Professional growth comes from openness to **feedback and reflective practice**.

There is no improvement for pupils without improvement in classroom practice, and no improvement in practice without effective professional development. **By investing in our staff, we invest in our students.**

High-quality professional learning is **evidence-informed, coherent and responsive**. We continually audit provision to drive sustained improvement.




We are driven by what improves learning experiences. We make choices that **enhance learning outcomes**.

We build **shared school culture and professional communities**.



## Great Teaching Charter

Together, we create lives of opportunity

Principle	Curriculum	Teaching	Assessment and Feedback
<b>Coherence</b>  Curriculum is content structured as narrative over time Concepts Sequence Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key <b>concepts</b> and big ideas are identified, <b>sequenced</b> and threaded through the curriculum.</li> <li>Progression is planned for across units/topics, phases and key stages to build complexity over time.</li> <li><b>Connections</b> with and between areas of learning are planned.</li> <li>Transition points are identified, and knowledge is built upon and revisited.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers plan <b>sequences</b> of lessons to support students to <b>connect</b> and consolidate learning over time.</li> <li>Teachers select core <b>concepts</b> and ideas and teach them in a way which is manageable for students.</li> <li>Teachers make explicit reference / links to key <b>concepts</b> and big ideas through and across lessons to <b>connect</b> learning and support students to make meaning.</li> <li>Teachers provide opportunities to revisit and build on knowledge, skills and understanding.</li> <li>Teachers choose pedagogical strategies to meaningfully convey curriculum content and activate hard thinking.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment is <b>coherent</b> with the planned curriculum – we assess what has been taught.</li> <li>Assessment is tailored for progression to meet students' needs.</li> <li>End points for transition stages are clearly identified – planning with the end in mind.</li> <li>Assessment is planned to capture knowledge and understanding of <b>concepts</b> and ideas.</li> <li>Assessment is used thoughtfully at transition points to feed back into curriculum planning.</li> </ul>
<b>Value</b>  We measure what we value Intent Purpose Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a clear shared vision and <b>intent</b> for the curriculum.</li> <li>The <b>purpose</b> – the 'what' and 'why' is clearly defined, given each school's/subject's context and vision.</li> <li>It is clear why aspects of the curriculum have been given greater or less <b>focus</b>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teaching enables 'the lived experience of the vision' – it reflects the curriculum <b>intent</b>.</li> <li>Teaching secures high levels of attention and participation.</li> <li>Assessment enables teachers to adapt planning and delivery <b>purposefully</b>.</li> <li>Pupils use <b>focused</b> feedback to reflect and improve.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment is designed around learning not performance.</li> <li>Assessment is coherent with the curriculum vision and <b>intent</b> – it has a clear <b>purpose</b>.</li> <li>Effective formative assessment moves learning forwards for all students – <b>value</b> inferences about learning can be made.</li> <li>The <b>value</b> derived from assessment should be at least commensurate with the time taken to mark it and its output.</li> </ul>
<b>Equity</b>  Curriculum is a lever for social justice Ambition Balance Inclusivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The curriculum is <b>ambitious</b> for all, regardless of starting points.</li> <li>Content is <b>well-balanced</b> – it can be gradually acquired to prevent cognitive overload, while developing in complexity to ensure sufficient challenge.</li> <li>The curriculum is <b>inclusive</b> – it is intentionally designed to meet need.</li> <li>There is <b>balance</b> between knowledge, intellectual curiosity and creativity with sufficient flex for teachers to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers have high expectations for all students to achieve their full potential.</li> <li>Every child is known – teachers understand and remove barriers for all students.</li> <li>Teachers create <b>inclusive</b> classrooms, where everyone has the right to learn.</li> <li>Assessment gives careful consideration to <b>balancing</b> cognitive load, opportunities to apply knowledge and work independently, and practice for consolidation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessments are designed and timed to check learning rather than performance – we only assess what has been taught.</li> <li>Assessment is <b>inclusive</b> – it matches the <b>ambition</b> of the planned curriculum and is accessible.</li> <li>Feedback is given in a <b>balanced</b> way – with care and respect, knowing not everything can be measured, understanding that some students struggle with failure. Teachers see opportunities to use feedback to motivate</li> </ul>



## Workload Charter

Together, we create lives of opportunity

<b>Communications</b>  We communicate in a way which is measured and appropriate and mindful of workload. We regularly ask for the views of colleagues to inform strategy and best practice in managing workload. <b>Communications will</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be concise</li> <li>Be with the necessary audience only</li> <li>Enable timely digestion and response</li> </ul> <b>We will respond to regular staff voice on a variety of workload reduction matters.</b> <b>There will be no expectation that staff respond to any email sent between agreed timeframes.</b> 4.30 pm and 8.00am, nor any email sent between 4.30pm on Friday and 8.00am on Monday, until those timeframes have elapsed. During school holidays email communication will be optional.	<b>Planning, Assessment &amp; Feedback</b>  We collaborate wherever possible to reduce workload. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shared curriculum planning</li> <li>Development of classroom-based feedback and assessment strategies: purposeful for students; manageable for teachers</li> <li>Use of innovative technology to facilitate planning, assessment and streamlined data systems</li> </ul>
<b>Management Requests</b>  The work we ask of our colleagues should be within their role responsibility or clearly support and influence its success. New strategies will not be added during the year. If they are an existing strategy will be replaced.	<b>Meetings</b>  Meetings will address school improvement priorities and have a focus on sharing and developing best practice. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Subject/area professional development in the school day</li> <li>Admin matters should be prioritised elsewhere where possible.</li> <li>For those not receiving leadership allowances there should be no more than one after school meeting per week, of no more than 1 hour duration, with a clear agenda, shared in advance</li> </ul>
<b>Policies</b>  We ensure that our policies are clear, concise and aligned with our vision and values. We review and update policies regularly to ensure they remain relevant and effective.	<b>Quality Improvement</b>  Professional Learning is the driver to improve practice. Evaluation and review activity will be developmental, not judgemental (improve not prove) and will inform development and sharing of good practice against improvement priorities.



## Ethical Leadership

Together, we create lives of opportunity

### Characteristics and Behaviours

The following framework identifies the values principles and ethical behaviours which all colleagues should model and for which they are accountable.

Our Values	Ethical Leadership	How we demonstrate this	We do not
<b>Excellence</b>  We are passionate about achieving greatness in everything we do.	<b>Leaders:</b> Have the highest expectations of themselves and others which they communicate clearly and model consistently. Leaders create an ambitious vision and continually strive for improvement. They help others to flourish, supporting their development and removing barriers to their success.	<b>We believe that everyone should give their best and aspire to be even better.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We are knowledgeable, competent and committed to developing the practice of colleagues</li> <li>We are ambitious, courageous and resolute in pursuit of our vision</li> <li>We are clear and honest</li> <li>We celebrate successes and professionally challenge</li> <li>We are reflective and open to support, responding when things go wrong</li> <li>We are measured, consistent and reliable</li> <li>We are committed to our own professional development</li> <li>We are outward looking and engage in collective decision-making</li> <li>We are advocates for the vision and values of our Trust</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Act in self-interest or work in isolation.</li> <li>Blame others for our shortcomings.</li> <li>Accept or ignore poor performance or low aspirations.</li> </ul>
<b>Care</b>  We treat everyone with thoughtfulness, empathy and compassion.	<b>Leaders:</b> See the person first; They build professional trust and belonging. They lead ethically demonstrating high levels of humility, emotional intelligence, kindness, understanding and empathy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We place others before ourselves.</li> <li>We are motivational and supportive</li> <li>We are aware of the impact of our words, behaviour and actions</li> <li>We are responsible for the climate and culture in our organisation</li> <li>We are visible, available and approachable</li> <li>We are trustworthy, thoughtful and discreet</li> <li>We work to build a culture of psychological safety, underpinned by the wellbeing charter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss others so as to undermine them to our audience when they are not present.</li> <li>Cause undue anxiety or isolation through our behaviours.</li> </ul>
<b>Respect</b>  We recognise our differences and treat people fairly in our thoughts, words and actions.	<b>Leaders:</b> Are authentic. They do what they communicate and share their own experiences and challenges, knowing we can all learn from one another. They empower and elevate others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We are collaborative and professionally generous</li> <li>We are equitable, fair and consistent</li> <li>We model trust and integrity at all times</li> <li>We are respectful of the time and role, the needs and situation of others</li> <li>We are reflective, adaptable and responsive</li> <li>We actively listen and are open to the differing views and contributions of others</li> <li>We assume the best of others and value their contributions and potential</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disparage the professional opinion of others.</li> </ul>

Together, we create lives of opportunity



# Principles

All colleagues have the capacity to **excel** and to **continually improve** upon their practice.

Professional development is both an **entitlement** and a **responsibility**. Professional growth comes from openness to **feedback and reflective practice**.

There is no improvement for pupils without improvement in classroom practice, and no improvement in practice without effective professional development. **By investing in our staff, we invest in our students.**

High-quality professional learning is **evidence-informed, coherent, responsive** and **inclusive**. We continually audit provision to drive sustained improvement.

We are driven by what improves learning experiences. We make choices that **enhance learning outcomes**.

We flourish when school **culture and conditions** are supportive of workload and well-being, when we are treated with **care and respect**, and when we are empowered to have **agency** in our work.

Learning is enhanced when we **value the contribution and voice of everyone in our community**.

We promote **collaboration and sharing of expertise** within and across our schools, and across the sector. We are **outward looking** and seek to work in partnership to enhance our provision and to **contribute to system-led improvement**.



# Mechanisms



- Professional Learning Communities (subject-specific)
- Trust conference (staff-led)
- Flex models to deliver the Early Career Framework and National Professional Qualifications
- Partnerships with values-aligned organisations (does the product fit?)
- Professional Learning and Improvement model

# Our Professional Learning & Improvement Model



## GMET Professional Teaching Charter

Sam Gibbs  
Trust Lead for Curriculum and Development


At GMET we want to develop **great teachers** to deliver excellence for our diverse community of students so that every child can make excellent progress and achieve highly regardless of background or barriers to learning.

Our goal is to drive **continual improvement** in teaching and support every teacher in developing their practice at every stage in their career. By investing in teacher education, we invest in pupils.

Our **Professional Teaching Charter** helps teachers to reflect on what 'excellence' in the classroom looks like and provides a starting point to help them explore the next area of their teaching that they want to develop.

Choose an area of the framework to focus on and begin your learning journey.

Curriculum and Planning	Teaching	Assessment and Feedback
<b>GMET Professional Standards:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Curriculum and Subject Knowledge</li><li>Planning Teaching</li><li>Relational Practice and Development</li></ul>	<b>GMET Professional Standards:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Securing Progress</li><li>Adaptation for Learning</li><li>Classroom and School Culture</li><li>Promoting Good Behaviour</li><li>Relational Practice and Development</li></ul>	<b>GMET Professional Standards:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Assessment and Feedback</li></ul>



## Teaching Charter

Greater Manchester Education Trust  
GMET Professional Teaching Charter  
Our commitment to you →

Log in →

CHARTERED  
The National College®  
Continue learning →

Online Training and CPD

### Professional Learning Communities

- English
- Maths
- Science
- Art and Technology
- Business
- Computing
- Geography
- History and RE

# Seeds of Impact



‘PLCs are a great opportunity to touch base with subject teachers from across the trust and explore our shared challenges and begin to look at solutions and improvements. It became clear we have a lot of talent across the trust and there is **an enormous amount of opportunity for sharing knowledge and skills.**’

‘A good vibe, everyone friendly. It felt purposeful, shared good practice and was **genuinely helpful to my practice.**’

‘The **sharing of ideas was fab** and **looking forward to more.** Especially how AI is being used to support different subjects.’

‘**I felt so empowered and inspired** by the whole day - well worth giving up my day off for!! **More of this please!** I am excited to have more subject specific cross trust CPD in future too. Many, many thanks to everyone involved in the organisation and planning. Deliverers were fantastic!’

‘I thought it was a great day and so many staff have said the same to me. Venue and logistics have developed in terms of the provision each time. Food was great. Great range of workshops. Good to have some outside providers particularly in the areas of SEND/behaviour - offering different insights. Great to have the **equity of provision for all staff.**’

‘Thank you. I really enjoyed it and it was **the best cross trust day I have ever been to.** It was productive and purposeful. **It felt positive that the Trust is listening to staff and moving forwards in the right direction.**’





# GMET

Greater Manchester  
Education Trust

**[sgibbs@gmetrust.org](mailto:sgibbs@gmetrust.org)**  
**[@samgibbs.bsky.social](https://www.bsky.social/samgibbs)**  
**[trustwidecpdleads.com](http://trustwidecpdleads.com)**

