

## Capital Expenditure Priorities

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The aim of this paper is to identify priorities for capital expenditure which are directly linked to the academy's and the Trust's vision, ethos and overall strategic plans.
- 1.2. The current [REDACTED] Academy Improvement Plan includes several objectives which can be achieved more quickly and effectively if there is capital investment.
- 1.3. This paper provides a summary of those objectives, together with proposals for associated capital expenditure.
- 1.4. For some of these objectives, solutions have already been identified and estimated costs calculated, and for others there may be more than potential solution. For the latter, estimated costs are benchmarks only, and we are very aware that there may be other options not yet considered.

### 2. Overview of Proposals

- 2.1. A summary of current improvement objectives and proposed related capital projects is provided in the table below, with a further of the rationale and detail for each project in sections as follows:-
  - Section 3: [Spaces](#)
  - Section 4: [Equipment](#)
  - Section 5: [Infrastructure](#)

Report ref	Project	Development stage	Estimated cost (£)	Target date	Improvement Plan Objectives				
<b>SPACES</b>									
3.1	Creation of Cultural and Learning Resource Centre	Initial plans/costs	70,000	31/08/21	1.10	3.3	3.5	4.8	
3.2	Install three additional PC suites, including at least one in the [REDACTED]	Cost estimated	75,000	31/08/21	1.13	4.8			
3.3	Increase capacity of internal Alternative Pathways provision	Initial plans/costs	15,000	31/08/21	1.8	1.13	2.4	4.7	4.8
3.4	Remodel sixth form area	Costs requested	TBC	31/08/21	4.8	5.4			
3.5	Create second dining area to allow continued separation of year groups at social times	Reviewing options	TBC	31/08/21	2.1	2.3	4.5		
<b>EQUIPMENT</b>									
4.1	IT refresh - teacher desktops and whiteboards	Cost estimated	60,000	ASAP	4.8				
4.2	Invest in additional resources for Art, Design and Photography	Cost estimated	35,000	31/03/21	1.13	4.8			
4.3	Install digital signage in social and circulation spaces	Cost estimated	10,000	31/08/21	3.6	4.5	4.8		
<b>INFRASTRUCTURE</b>									
5.1	Upgrade [REDACTED] wireless network	Cost estimated	40,000	ASAP	4.8				
5.2	Improve network infrastructure	Cost estimated	50,000	ASAP	4.8				
5.3	Upgrade and expand CCTV coverage	Cost estimated	10,000	ASAP	3.6	4.5	4.8		

Quality of education
  Behaviour and attitudes
  Personal development
  Leadership & Management
  Sixth form

### 3. Spaces

#### 3.1. Creation of Cultural and Learning Resource Centre

##### 3.1.1. Description

- 3.1.1.1. The first element of this project would involve converting [REDACTED] into a flexible Learning Resource Centre, available for class bookings and independent study with a wide range of books, up to 30 IT workstations, and a flexible area for meetings and interventions and for students to sit quietly at social times.
- 3.1.1.2. The space would also be available for independent study at the beginning and end of the Academy day. It would also provide a space for cultural and community events, including visits from authors, artists and historians.

- 3.1.1.3. Secondly, the existing small library in the gallery area would become a museum with loans from local and national museums, and rotating displays linked to themes and schemes of work from the academic and personal development curricula. We would join the two spaces by installing a stairway.
- 3.1.1.4. Finally, we would use wall and floor space for displaying art created by students alongside temporary artist exhibitions.
- 3.1.1.5. A full-time librarian / centre manager post has been included in the revenue budget for current and subsequent years but will not be appointed until the project is approved.

### **3.1.2. Rationale**

- 3.1.2.1. According to research by the School Library Association, 90% of English secondary schools have a library which is accessible to students. However, the research also identified that schools with a higher proportion of students eligible free school meals are more than twice as likely **not** to have access to a designated library space, and for those that do, they are 12% less likely to have access to digital resources in the library space.
- 3.1.2.2. This inequality is reflected at [REDACTED] where the existing small library facility is not sufficient for a large secondary school. The collection of books is not broad enough, and it is not permanently staffed. The space is not available for students before and after school, or during social times
- 3.1.2.3. The Literacy Trust identifies a range of benefits to well-resourced school library provision, including positive impact on academic attainment and reading and writing skills. School libraries have also been found to have an impact on pupils' reading enjoyment, reading behaviour and attitudes towards reading, and have also been connected to motivation and attitudes, self-esteem and feelings of success and accomplishment.
- 3.1.2.4. The proposed project will offer all of these benefits to our students, with the additional advantage of access to wider cultural capital through the museum and gallery spaces. As with IT skills and experience (see 3.2 below) it is essential that give our students as many opportunities in, and exposure to, cultural capital as their peers locally and nationally.
- 3.1.2.5. As identified in the SEF, there are not yet enough students who read for pleasure, or who routinely have access to books. The introduction of reading time to the curriculum this year has been very successful in sparking students' interest in reading, but we need to be able to capitalise on that by developing a more overt reading culture
- 3.1.2.6. Given the context of [REDACTED] our SMSC curriculum already has a strong focus on cultural capital. A museum space could use artefacts as a catalyst for exploring topics in more detail, and for guest speakers and events.
- 3.1.2.7. Proposals for extending resources in art and photography (see 4.1 below) mean that we will be able to produce and display high quality images of students' work. We want to be able to celebrate this an increase engagement and aspiration by showcasing the talents of our students.
- 3.1.2.8. The museum and gallery in particular would generate media interest and raise the profile of [REDACTED] as an innovative academy.
- 3.1.2.9. The centre, especially the museum, would provide opportunities to develop our links with local primary schools.

## **3.2. Install three additional PC suites, including at least one in the [REDACTED] building**

### **3.2.1. Description**

- 3.2.1.1. The PC suites would be created in existing classrooms with 30 fixed machines in each. These would be timetabled for subjects requiring the use of computers, and at other times would be a bookable resource for all subjects.

### 3.2.2. Rationale

3.2.2.1. In 2017, the average secondary school had 430.7 computers available for student use (BESR 2017). Student numbers at [REDACTED] are higher than average ([REDACTED] as opposed to 965) and the benchmark number of machines would therefore be [REDACTED]

3.2.2.2. The current position is as follows:

Description	Devices
Desktop computers in IT suites	93
Laptops usually allocated to specific subjects with substantial coursework elements	60
Bookable laptops	15
<b>Total available for general use</b>	<b>168</b>
Laptops specifically for examination access	15
Laptops allocated to intervention, literacy support, and inclusion*	107
<b>Total allocated to specific groups / projects</b>	<b>122</b>
<b>Overall total</b>	<b>290</b>

3.2.2.3. There are currently no fixed desktop computers for students in the [REDACTED] building.

3.2.2.4. To support all of our students to have the best possible life chances, we must prepare them further study and/or the workplace. If they are to compete on a level playing field with their peers locally and nationally, including those from more affluent backgrounds, they must have regular and frequent experience of using IT, and be able to use the most common software packages to the same standard as their peers from more affluent backgrounds.

3.2.2.5. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, almost 40% of our students did not have a device at home, and even those who have access to devices may not always find it easy to study quietly in their home environments. In addition, our recent experience of introducing remote learning has brought home to us that the IT skills of many parents and carers are not well developed, and they have struggled to support their children in home learning.

3.2.2.6. Two rooms on the second floor of the main building have been initially identified as potential PC suites, as they have easy access to services. The location of PC suite(s) in the [REDACTED] building would be established through discussions with curriculum leaders and the central IT team.

3.2.2.7. Three additional computer suites, plus the 30 machines in the proposed Learning and Cultural Resource Centre (see 3.1 above) and 24 MacBooks (see 4.2 below) would increase the total student machines at [REDACTED] to 434, making considerable progress towards the national average.

3.2.2.8. We have of course recently received just under 320 devices from the DfE to support remote learning for students without the resources at home. Whilst some or all of these may eventually be returned to the Academy, the machines are of a substantially lower specification than those purchased for on-site use, and would not be suitable for long term use on site.

### 3.3. Increase capacity of internal Alternative Pathways provision

#### 3.3.1. Description

3.3.1.1. This project would involve incorporate an existing large maths classroom (F9) into the current Alternative Pathways space and dividing it into two smaller classrooms.

#### 3.3.2. Rationale

3.3.2.1. The existing Alternative Pathways space, created from one remodelled classroom, was introduced in [REDACTED] as part of the wider project to meet the academic and welfare needs of our students most at risk of exclusion. Other elements of the project included the appointment of full time AP teachers in

maths, English, science and humanities, and the introduction of an adapted behaviour code and academy day.

- 3.3.2.2. The provision has four small classrooms, and there is one group in each of years 8-11. We have already seen a positive impact on student progress and behaviour, including a reduction in fixed term exclusions for students in this cohort.
- 3.3.2.3. The space was originally envisaged as a temporary measure pending the completion of the construction of the Wave 4 provision on the main site in the location of the former Construction Hub. However, as plans for the new space have developed, it has become clear that there will continue to be a need for the existing in-house provision.
- 3.3.2.4. The proposed changes would enable us to accommodate students in all five year groups, as well as providing break-out space and room for 1:1 mentoring support.
- 3.3.2.5. Whilst the proposal would mean losing one mainstream classroom on the maths corridor, the reduction of the sixth form to one small year group and the remodelling of the sixth form common room area (see 3.4 below) will more than compensate for this.

### 3.4. Remodel Sixth Form area

#### 3.4.1. Description

- 3.4.1.1. There is currently a large space allocated as a post-16 social space on the second floor of the main building. It is proposed that this area is remodelled to allow for at least two additional classrooms.

#### 3.4.2. Rationale

- 3.4.2.1. As Trustees are aware, we have sought approval in principle for the closure of the sixth form, and are drafting a business case. The proposal is that the current Year 12 (■■■■ students) will be the last post-16 year group at the academy.
- 3.4.2.2. Whilst the sixth form reduction will free up some additional classroom space, initial indications on Year 7 numbers suggest that there will be an increase of 30-40 students in September, requiring at least one extra classroom. In addition, the proposal for Alternative Pathways space outlined in section 3.3 above would take one further classroom from the mainstream timetable.
- 3.4.2.3. It is also worth noting that it would be relatively straightforward and cost-effective to install IT provision in the current sixth form common room, as there is already good access to services.
- 3.4.2.4. If this project proceeds, we would of course ensure that Year 13 students still have some separate social space in ■■■■

### 3.5. Create second dining area to allow continued separation of year groups at social times

#### 3.5.1. Description

- 3.5.1.1. Create a fixed or flexible dining space and servery for Key Stage 4 students, accommodating one year group for each sitting.

#### 3.5.2. Rationale

- 3.5.2.1. In September 2020, we introduced a number of temporary COVID-19 measures to restrict the contact between year groups at social times, with separate entrances, stairwells, outdoor spaces, and dining areas.
- 3.5.2.2. As a part of this, we created of a temporary dining space in the ■■■■ which is used by Year 11 only in the first break and lunch sessions, and by Year 10 in the second sessions.
- 3.5.2.3. Feedback from staff and students has been universally positive, with many citing improvements in behaviour, reduced queuing times, more space to eat, and the creation of positive year group identities.

3.5.2.4. Whilst the easiest and most cost-effective solution may be to build on existing temporary arrangements, the dual use of the theatre space would present challenges: in particular, even if set-up and take-down became more rapid, there may be an impact on the design and installation of sets for performing arts productions.

3.5.2.5. If we proceed with this project, therefore, the first stage would involve consideration of possible alternative locations.

## **4. EQUIPMENT**

### **4.1. Refresh classroom IT, especially in the main building**

#### **4.1.1. Description**

4.1.1.1. To upgrade the IT available to teachers in the MEA building classrooms to the following minimum specification:

- One teacher desktop PC with monitor
- One projector.
- One display / projection board with audio visual provision, including faceplates
- One visualiser
- One telephone extension

#### **4.1.2. Rationale**

4.1.2.1. Existing classroom IT provision, particularly in the main building, is hindering teaching and learning. The technology is a blend of old and new items, mostly in excess of 5 years old.

4.1.2.2. Interactive boards are no longer interactive in most cases, and projector orientation is out of sync in most classrooms in the academy. In addition, expansion and internal remodelling have left a legacy of poor cable management.

4.1.2.3. Teacher desktop PCs can take in excess of 5 minutes to load up, and if multiple staff are logged on to one machine, this slows performance even more. This has a negative impact on the prompt start to lessons, exacerbated even further by the current COVID-19 measures, where most students remain in one classroom and teachers move around the site to teach them.

4.1.2.4. The absence of telephone extensions in any classrooms can also hinder teaching, learning, behaviour and safeguarding. If a member of staff requires IT, classroom management or first aid support, this has to be done via email or by staff physically leaving the classroom to access a two-way radio – something which is often not possible for teachers if they are the sole adult in the room.

4.1.2.5. Equally, if the Attendance Officer needs to check on an absent student or a missing register, this also has to be done via email or radio contact, adding to the time taken to resolve an issue.

### **4.2. Invest in additional resources for art, design, and photography**

#### **4.2.1. Description**

4.2.1.1. Purchase of 24 MacBooks, a large format printer, and an additional class set of digital cameras.

#### **4.2.2. Rationale**

4.2.2.1. Our Key Stage 4 curriculum currently includes GCSEs in Art, Photography, Textiles and 3D Design, and the Level 2 OCR Cambridge National award in Creative iMedia. In addition, we have recently introduced music at Key Stage 3, and will be considering whether to expand it into KS4 for 2022-23.

4.2.2.2. Apple computers are the industry standard for the creative sector, and experience in using them in school will give our students an advantage if they wish to work within the sector. In addition, the resources would provide us with more scope and flexibility as we continue to review the curriculum across the academy.

- 4.2.2.3. The introduction of Apple technology would also create capacity in the future for our students to study additional creative subjects, such as graphic design and TV & film production.
- 4.2.2.4. Our printers currently have the capacity to print up to A3 size, and anything larger is outsourced to local printing companies. The costs of printing in large format can be high – for examples, a set of A1 posters for classroom and circulation spaces purchased in January to support an academy-wide behaviour reset cost £645.
- 4.2.2.5. If we were able to print in house, we would also be able to print examples of students' photography work and display them in the proposed new Learning and Cultural Resource Centre, and around the Academy. This would offer an opportunity to showcase students' skills and raise aspirations in, and awareness of, creative subjects.

#### 4.3. Install digital signage in social and circulation spaces

##### 4.3.1. Description

- 4.3.1.1. Placement of a number of large TV screens in communal areas around the academy.

##### 4.3.2. Rationale

- 4.3.2.1. Digital signage is a very effective way of embedding culture and sharing key messages. Examples of this include:
  - Reminders of the ██████ Way
  - Schedules for extra-curricular activities
  - Names of attendance / behaviour reward winners
  - Film & photo footage of student activities
  - Year 11 countdown to exams, and revision and booster session timetables
  - Aspirational content - e.g. pen pictures and photos of former students who have gone on to university and careers
- 4.3.2.2. In addition, the ability to show rolling news coverage and cultural events would support development of students' cultural capital and their understanding of life in modern Britain.

## 5. INFRASTRUCTURE

### 5.1. Upgrade to wireless network

#### 5.1.1. Description

- 5.1.1.1. This would involve:
  - A full audit of all existing access points, including the removal of obsolete points and identifying and resolving any faults
  - A full wireless site survey should be conducted and a new system explored.
  - Installation of a new systems which is future-proofed as far as possible, allowing for easy expansion.

#### 5.1.2. Rationale

- 5.1.2.1. The academy wireless controller is in excess of 7 years old and has no support associated to it.
- 5.1.2.2. A full wireless survey has not been conducted in some time, although an initial investigation has revealed a number of old access points from a previous system still in situ.
- 5.1.2.3. The current wireless infrastructure is insufficient to support existing levels of use, with regular failure of connections resulting in lost learning time and unsaved work. The existing system cannot be expanded, and is preventing reliable coverage in a number of areas across the site.

5.1.2.4. The introduction of additional devices proposed in 3.2 above will not be possible without this upgrade.

## 5.2. Improve network infrastructure

### 5.2.1. **Description**

5.2.2. This would involve:

- Upgrading all existing switches to PoE (Power over Ethernet) and 1gb. 48 Port switches.
- Introduction of a cabling colour scheme to enable rapid identification of attached devices.
- Placing a limit of 100 metres on all cable runs
- Rationalising connection devices to ensure they are of the same type wherever possible.

### 5.2.3. **Rationale**

5.2.3.1. Switches form the background of the IT network and can greatly improve overall performance for users and connected devices.

5.2.3.2. Existing servers are recently installed and function well. However, the switches currently in place are all more than five years old, are not gigabit switches, and most have reached full capacity. This hinders network performance and does not allow the academy to reap the full benefit of the servers.

5.2.3.3. In addition, there is currently no colour coding structure or no proper documentation, which increases the time taken to identify and rectify faults.

## 5.3. Upgrade and expand CCTV coverage

### 5.3.1. **Description**

5.3.1.1. This would involve commissioning a specialist security company to review, install and position CCTV cameras to achieve maximum potential and coverage from the system. Camera footage would be accessed using a software-based system which can be run from a server and accessed by anyone with the relevant permissions.

### 5.3.2. **Rationale**

5.3.2.1. CCTV is a crucial tool for reviewing behaviour incidents, particularly where there are serious allegations against students or staff, or when a member of staff has not been able to identify a student.

5.3.2.2. At present, there are two separate CCTV systems in place, and a number of cameras are in situ but no longer functional. Overall site coverage is patchy, with many blind spots, and the remaining non-functioning cameras still in place, which can be misleading.

5.3.2.3. In addition, the software has to be physically installed on staff devices, and is difficult to use effectively without considerable training and experience.

5.3.2.4. A dedicated re-vamped system, especially one which is easily accessible, will help with clarification where there are conflicting accounts of an incident.

5.3.2.5. In addition, it will allow behaviour teams to proactively review student activity in locations which are not covered by staff duty rotas, and to take action in cases of poor behaviour which may otherwise have not been noticed. This is an important element of the next stage of our behaviour strategy.