Information, Communication & Technology (ICT) Strategy 2017-2019
1. Context

1.1. Over the past 20 years, the progressive development of new solutions has revolutionised our understanding of ICT and seen the dawn of the “digital age”. From neighbourhoods to nations; businesses to shared interest groups: information and communication technologies have enhanced our capacity to connect and have transformed our ability to learn and develop, with smart phones and digital devices offering millions of people an affordable means to “plug and play” as social media give voice to the many.

1.2. In the year 2000, there was a reported 400 million people using the internet across the planet. Estimates for 2015 have increased this number to 3.2 billion.\footnote{Source: ITU} 3/12 of citizens in developed nations used the internet in 2000, compared to an estimated 10/12 in 2015.

1.3. Fig 1: Changing consumer habits (Source: ICU)

1.4. The use of blackboards and chalk in our classrooms is now a thing of the past: projection boards; smart boards; tablets. Our children and young people are fluent in the use of technologies that many adults are only just now getting to grips with. In its 2011 strategy, the Government states that:
“Information and communications technology (ICT) is critical for the effective operation of government and the delivery of the services it provides to citizens and businesses.”

1.5. Any new technologies require capital investment, regardless of their affordability. Having the infrastructure to enable the use of new technologies is as important as having the equipment in our asset catalogue, and there is no dedicated funding pot for schools to turn to for investment in ICT.

1.6. All of the schools in Nexus Multi Academy Trust have a ring-fenced budget for ICT, though this is typically small when compared to other schools and settings, largely due to historical allocations from the Local Authority-maintained period.

1.7. Each school has its own School Improvement Plan (SIP) and ICT is an underpinning factor in the ongoing development of each school’s offer: acting as a delivery vehicle for a fit-for-purpose curriculum offer; effective leadership & management; robust safeguarding practices; and effective engagement with parents, carers and the wider school community.

1.8. The purpose of Nexus MAT is to challenge all our schools to be the best they can be: in our strategic approach to ICT, we set out our aims and ambitions for what we intend to achieve with and for our schools, and we provide our Directors and Governors with a clear means by which to define (and measure success).

1.9. This strategy will be implemented through the development of a Nexus MAT ICT implementation plan, which in turn will support the delivery of the each school’s improvement plan. Both of these plans will be reviewed and updated annually.

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1.10. **Fig. 2: Connectivity between this strategy and outcomes for children**

- **Better outcomes or children**
- **Improved quality of teaching**
- **Challenging School Improvement Planning and action**
- **Informing**

1.11. This strategy is one of the many delivery vehicles for the Nexus 5 Year business/growth plan. Whilst it connects to all of our strategic business objectives, it is an essential element of the follow:

- **Objective 1.**: Development of new partnerships;
- **Objective 2.** Sponsorship and improvement of schools in need of help and support;
- **Objective 3.** Increased quality of provision from all our schools; and
- **Objective 7.** A financially viable and sustainable Multi Academy Trust.
Year 1: Baselining and creating a common ICT infrastructure

1.12. In our first 12 months of existence, Nexus Multi Academy Trust will invest in ICT leadership across all its constituent schools. This leadership will ensure there is a clear assessment of the ICT standards of all our schools, with specific focus on:

1.12.1. Infrastructure (server and networks);
1.12.2. Workstations and devices (including printers and telephony);
1.12.3. Services; i.e application licensing, data lines, hardware and software support contracts.
1.12.4. Support (including communications to stakeholders);
1.12.5. Information governance (including e-safety).
1.12.6. Communications

1.13. Detailed needs assessments will inform a plan which provides all Nexus schools and the parent MAT with a defined minimum standard of ICT infrastructure so that:

1.13.1. All schools are achieving value for money in their procurement of ICT and in the continuation of contractual arrangements;
1.13.2. Where value for money is not being achieved, services are re-procured to achieve best-value;
1.13.3. Schools move to joint procurement of ICT solutions which benefit from economies of scale;
1.13.4. Electronic communication channels are consistently optimised by schools and the central Trust to share key messages and raise the profile of Nexus;
1.13.5. Service support for ICT is consistently meeting the needs of schools from within the MAT resources;
1.13.6. The MAT’s information governance is meeting the expectations of the Information Commissioner and e-safety practices keep children protected from harm.
1.13.7. The MAT’s corporate data is suitably secure, with appropriate access controls and
backup, and is available to MAT staff wherever and whenever it is required.
2. Years 2 and 3: Securing investment to deliver modernisation of our estate

2.1. With a common standard in place across the existing academies in the Trust and joint procurement arrangements ensuring best value, new schools joining Nexus will be required to comply with our established ICT procedures. Effective transition planning will ensure that this happens at the time of – or as quickly as possible after - conversion.

2.2. In year 2 of this strategy’s lifetime, a continuation of the work started in year 1 will ensure that there is conformity with our defined standards in all our constituent schools and that ICT is continuing to deliver improvements in the quality of teaching and learning (as per the MAT Improvement Strategy).

2.3. Joint procurement will generate some extra capacity in schools’ existing ICT budgets, and wider school financial efficiencies as a result of the Trust’s work will present Headteachers with the option to increase budget allocation for ICT.

2.4. Devolved capital can be utilised for ICT investment, though the schools which formed Nexus MAT all have small amounts of devolved capital which are typically less than the maintenance costs of the school buildings themselves. In essence, this leaves little to no manoeuvrability in terms of additional ICT investment.

2.5. Pupil premium can be used to procure ICT for individual children if this is a means of supporting improved progress, though personalised ICT solutions need to connect into a fit-for-purpose ICT hardware infrastructure.

2.6. Therefore, it is highly likely that there will not be enough funding to deliver wholesale modernisation of the Trust’s ICT estate, and further funding will be required.

2.7. The Nexus 5 year business plan outlines how the Trust will prioritise optimisation of grant funding and other
income generation to augment our spending power, and this includes exploring how we can partner with commercial organisations to increase our capacity to invest.

2.8. Once the Trust has secured additional investment, this will be operationalised through the publication of a SMART delivery plan.

3. Governance & review

3.1. This strategy will be reported on to the Trust Board of Directors at least annually and will be scrutinised on a termly basis by the Trust’s Audit & Finance Committee.

3.2. The strategy will be subject to annual review.