

# At XP Trust, we build our community through...

## ‘What do we do to survive, sustain and thrive?’

*‘To start a school is to proclaim what it means to be human.’*

**Tom James**  
EL Education  
USA

**XP.**  
TRUST



*‘Great schools are created with tremendous care, sweat and love, hand-crafted through struggles and collaboration. They can’t be duplicated quickly and with a formula. You need to find high quality educators to make a great school, there is no substitute.’*

**Ron Berger**  
EL Education  
USA



XP school opened in 2014. Founded by Andy Sprakes and Gwyn ap Harri, XP was and is heavily influenced by the schools of High Tech High and Expeditionary Learning. The school’s academically-rigorous and engaging curriculum, focusing on character growth and beautiful work, was the first model for XP schools and paved the way for the formation of XP Trust.

[xpschool.org](http://xpschool.org) | [#WeAreXP](https://twitter.com/WeAreXP)



XP East opened in 2017. It was designed to replicate XP School and illustrate how the original model was scalable by creating more small schools. XP East is literally next door to XP School on the same site, forming a Doncaster campus. The sports hall is shared with both schools and the wider community through a partnership with Club Doncaster.

[xpeast.org](http://xpeast.org) | [#WeAreXPEast](https://twitter.com/WeAreXPEast)



XP Gateshead opened in 2021 on the site of an existing school building. Again, a replica of the size and structure of the original XP school, XP Gateshead is the first XP Trust school to be opened outside the Doncaster area. The school was founded by Mark Lovatt, and Martin Said, a pioneering teacher who’d worked at XP School in Doncaster from the very beginning. All XP secondary schools share curriculum and expertise, collaborating and iterating our processes together.

[xpgateshead.org](http://xpgateshead.org) | [#WeAreXPGateshead](https://twitter.com/WeAreXPGateshead)



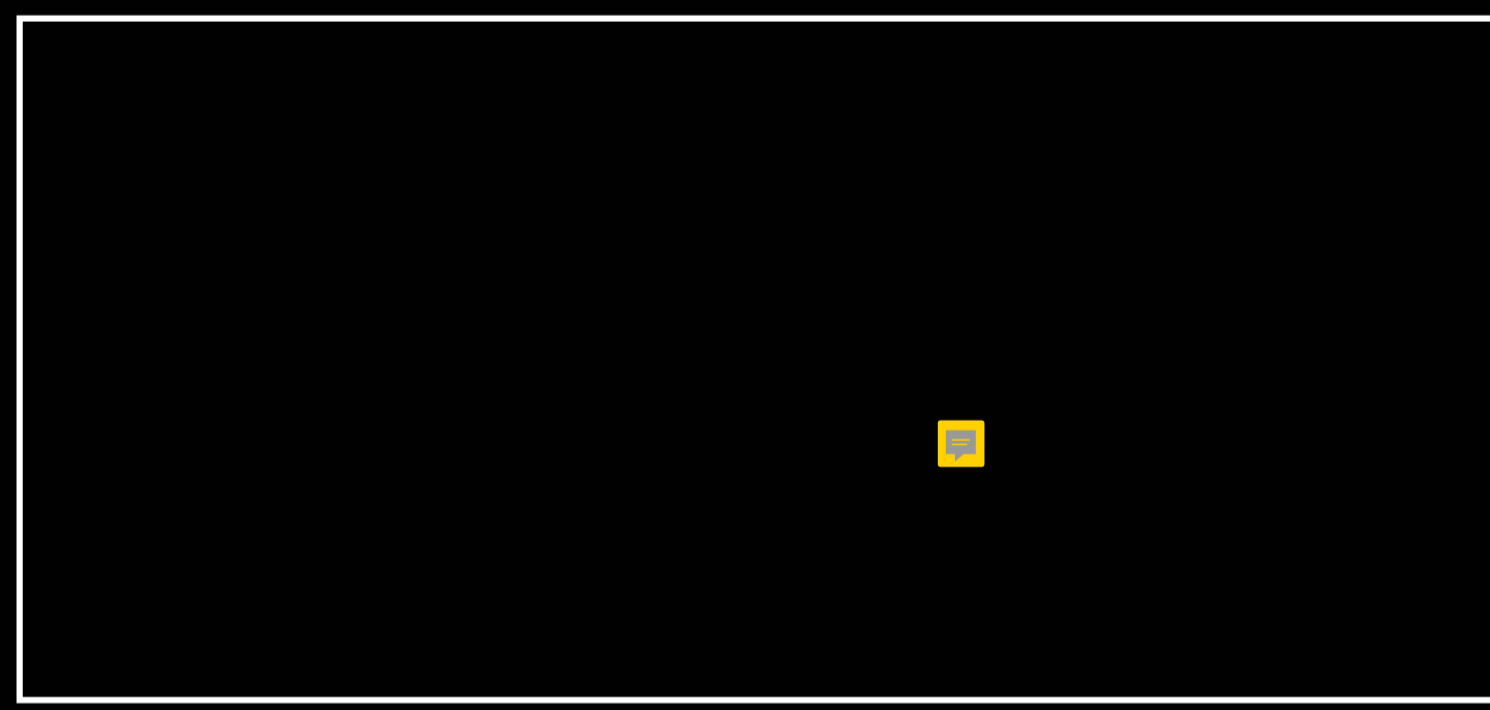
Green Top School joined the XP Trust in September 2017. It is a primary school and serves the ex-mining town of Thorne in the North East of Doncaster. By joining the two XP schools, Green Top initiated the creation of the XP Trust.

[greentopschool.org](http://greentopschool.org) | [#CrewGreenTop](https://twitter.com/CrewGreenTop)



Plover School joined the XP Trust in June 2020. It is a primary school and serves the community of Intake, a central suburb of Doncaster. The school academised with the XP Trust after a substantial partnership between Neil Butler and Doncaster Local Authority. Plover School’s progress was sustained by the leadership structures of Green Top School, with leaders leaving Green Top to take up roles at Plover in 2019.

[ploverschool.co.uk](http://ploverschool.co.uk) | [#LovePlover](https://twitter.com/LovePlover)



Norton Junior School joined the XP Trust in July 2019. It is a primary school that serves the communities of Norton and Askern in the North West of Doncaster. In 2020, the two Norton Schools, Juniors and Infants, decided to create a campus leadership model and work even closer together for the children of their community.

[njsch.uk](http://njsch.uk) | [#CrewNorton](https://twitter.com/CrewNorton)



Norton Infant School joined the XP Trust in July 2019. It is a primary school that serves the communities of Norton and Askern in the North West of Doncaster. In 2020, the two Norton Schools, Juniors and Infants, decided to create a campus leadership model and work even closer together for the children of their community.

[morotn-inf.uk](http://morotn-inf.uk) | [#NortonInspired](https://twitter.com/NortonInspired)

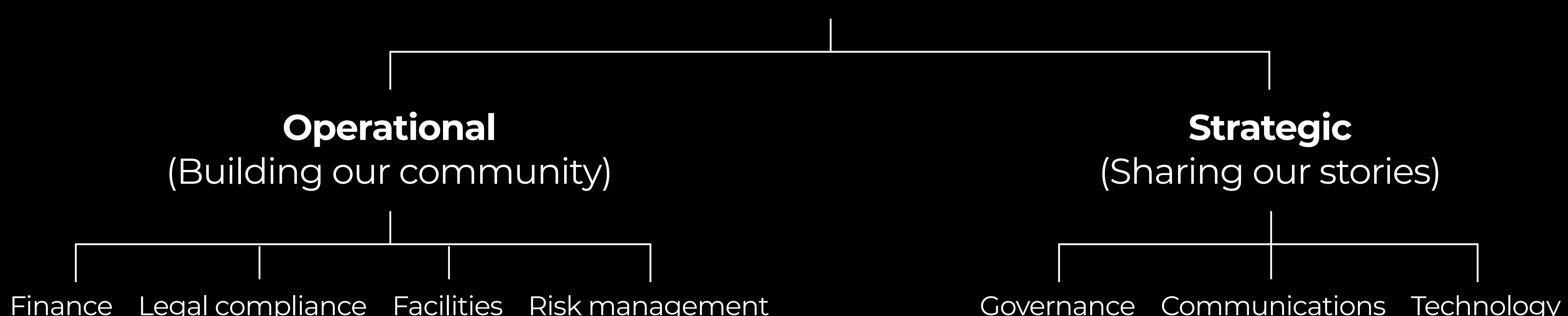


Carcroft School joined the XP Trust in September 2021. It is a primary school that serves the ex-mining community of Carcroft. Staff completed the school introduction phase of joining the XP Trust during the pandemic lockdown in 2020. Their greetings cards Expedition product emphasised their alignment to the XP Trust Design Principles.

[carcroftprimary.co.uk](http://carcroftprimary.co.uk) | [#WeAreCarcroft](https://twitter.com/WeAreCarcroft)

## All our schools are supported by the Central Trust Team

The Central Trust team provides operational and strategic support to each school through centralised services.



[xptrust.org](http://xptrust.org)



# Activism...

## ‘How are we actively contributing to building a better world?’

### Powerful Knowledge

Our expeditionary curriculum, designed by our teachers, is built on the powerful knowledge that enables our children to create a better world.

### Our Curriculum

To actively contribute to building a better world, we must:

Look up and out at our world

Look around at our community

Look inside at ourselves and each other

These are the pillars of our curriculum through which we teach the national curriculum standards. As we grow, we become stewards of our world, our community, ourselves and others.

#### Our world Climate emergency

If we want our students to change the world, they need to save it first. To do this, we need to understand our world and our place within it.

Our students make the knowledge they acquire powerful by actively making a positive difference to our world.

#### Our community Social justice

We uncover, confront and challenge inequities of race, gender, identity and class through our work and use the knowledge we acquire to affect social and cultural change.

Our students become leaders of this change.

#### Ourselves and others Diversity and belonging

Through the power of crew, we know our community is stronger because of our differences. Our expeditions allow our students to deepen their empathy and understanding of the value of difference and non-conformity.

We strive for equality through the process of equity.

Our curriculum is delivered predominantly through cross disciplinary learning expeditions to ensure learning is relevant, purposeful and authentic. Our expeditions are standards-based projects that are specifically designed to make connections between subjects and encourage deep and purposeful learning experiences.

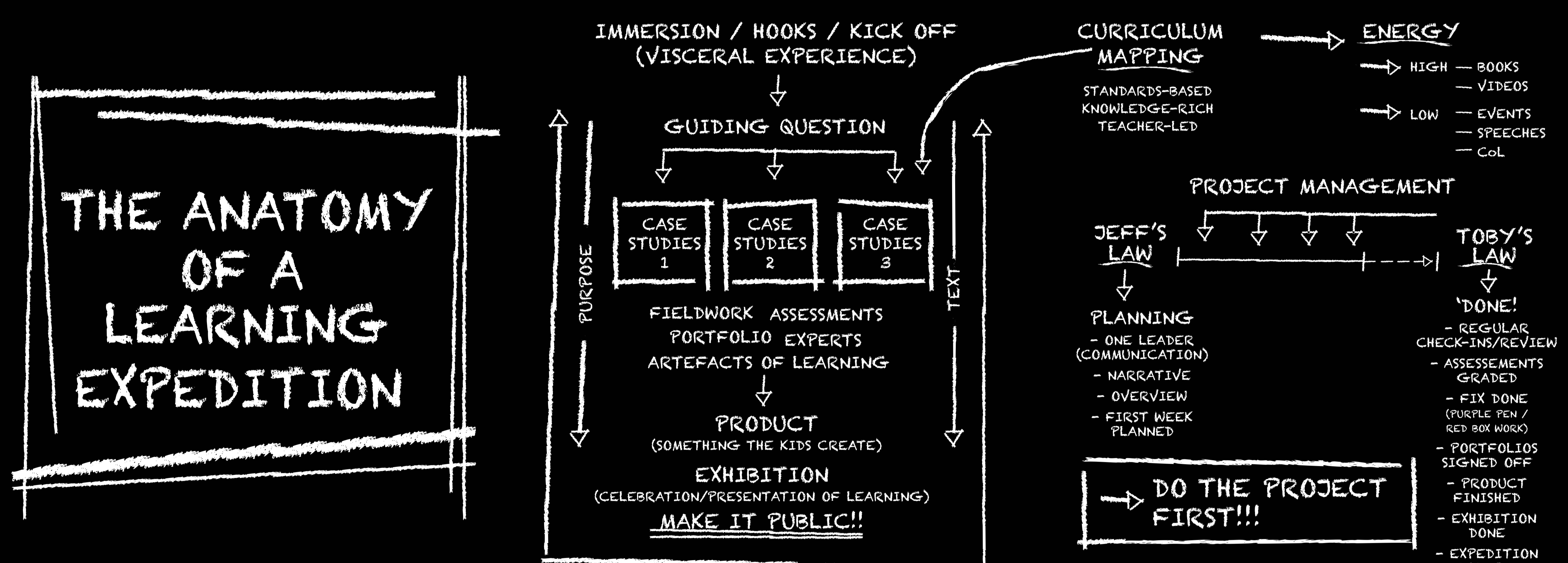
Expeditions are tightly structured through careful mapping of standards, skills and content and designed by teachers to ensure that all students:

Grow their character in readiness for the challenges presented by the world

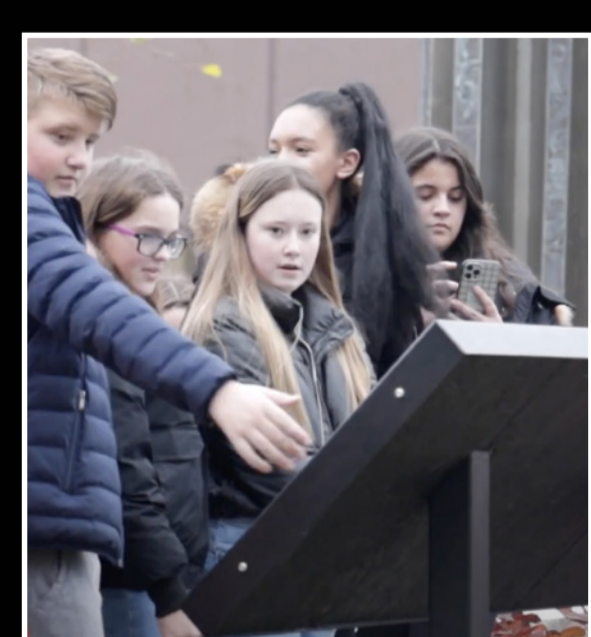
Produce beautiful work and through this are agents for positively improving themselves, their community and the wider world

Make better than expected academic progress

Our ‘Anatomy of a Learning Expedition’ is the process we use to design expeditions...



## Working hard to create beautiful work

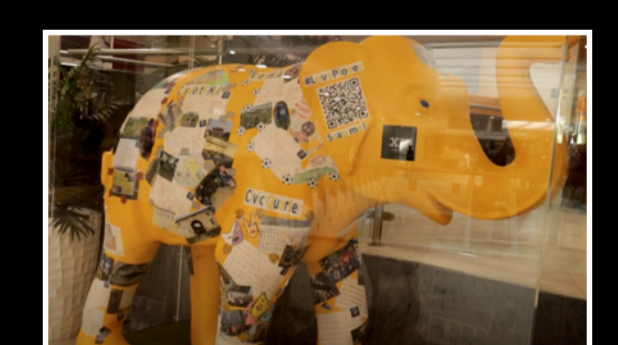
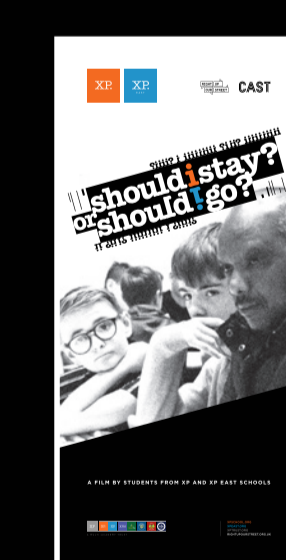


Our curriculum is knowledge-rich, standards-based and teacher-led which allows our students to express who they are through their work. Our students work really hard because they enjoy the work, just like we as adults do. Our curriculum is also experience-rich, utilising the community that surrounds us to provide experts that are often only too happy to share their passion with our students and staff.

Our children experience more than just the four walls of their classroom. Powerful knowledge in XP's curriculum was evident in the expedition, 'From the ground up', where the students were asked the question, 'What does the community of Doncaster owe to the miners?'

They didn't just learn that there are coal seams under Doncaster, or why they were formed. They interviewed and wrote biographies of miners, pit nurses, members of parliament and people who grew up through the miners strike. They didn't just experience going down an actual pit and visit the headquarters of the National Union of Miners, but they went there when the enquiry about Orgreave was cancelled, and they were interviewed by The Guardian newspaper which resulted in our students' opinions being published in a national newspaper. Their book is available online and in our local Waterstones bookshop.

That is 'powerful knowledge'.



*'Its brilliant to be here today. I came to XP because I was interested in the way they were modelling a new kind of education which looks fantastic. It turned out that the students had done this incredible project where they'd researched Suffragettes from Doncaster, like Lillian Lenton and raised money to create a plaque.'*

Sarah Gavron | Film Director | Suffragette (Motion Picture)

Speaking at the XP and XP East product launch and celebration in Doncaster.

*'I like XP because they basically do things differently, this work is not something you would see every day of every week in every shopping centre so the involvement for us with a local school is incredibly important because it is different... It's thinking outside the box... when you are engaging with local people, using their artwork and their work it just ties the community together.'*

Ian Leech | Marketing Manager | Doncaster Frenchgate Centre

Speaking about the work displayed by XP Trust students in the town's major shopping centre.

*'I think it is really important that we form a relationship with the Conversation Club and the asylum seekers in general and that we build that support network from the school to the community and that we give back to the community.'*

Guraaj Kaur | XP Student

Speaking about what we could do to further help asylum seekers as part of the final product for the expedition, 'Should I Stay or Should I Go?'

xptrust.org



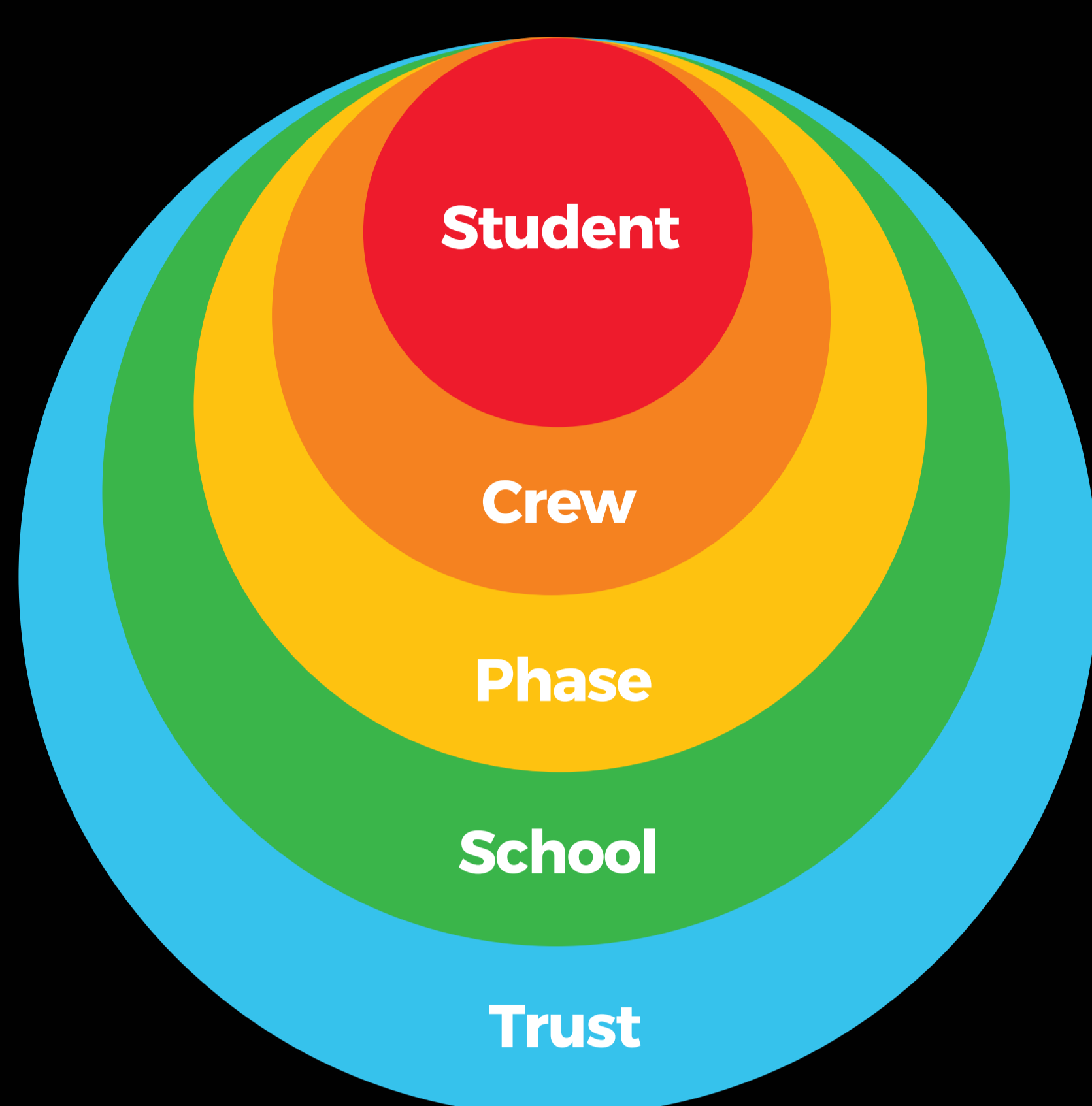
# Leadership...

‘How are we moving towards where we want to be?’

## Learning to Lead

To know how we are moving towards where we want to be, we need to know where we are, where we need to be and the steps we need to take to get there. This is the same if we are a student, a teacher, a crew leader, an expedition lead, a phase lead, a school lead, an executive leader, a director or a member of our Trust.

We call this our ‘Schools within schools’ accountability model which allows us to grow and scale consistently across different domains.



## Schools within schools

To grow leadership within each other, we hold ourselves accountable for our pledges in crew; be it a student crew or a professional crew.

What is good enough for our students is good enough for all of us, so we ask the same questions and use the same techniques we use to check for understanding, critique and public celebration both for our students and professionally.

The same guiding questions for our design principles are used to align everything we do from student through to Trust. While the accountable outcomes look differently for each role in our community, the questions are the same, forming our ‘culture burger’.



### Students

Critique | Student-led conferences  
 Passage presentations | Presentations of learning  
 Ambassador tours | Making pledges



### How we do it



### Adults

Distributed Leadership model | Systematic teaching  
 Professional pathways | Schools within schools  
 School improvement cycle | Trust engagement

## Rubrics, evaluation and progress

To evaluate where we are and where we need to be, we develop rubrics to show what the things we do look like. We use the levels beginning, developing, secure and excellence. These rubrics are primarily used to show progress from our different starting points, and it is our progress that is celebrated, not just our attainment. For instance, rubrics are developed to evaluate progress against national curriculum standards for students. In the same way, we evaluate school improvement standards for heads of school.

	Beginning	Developing	Secure	Excellence
Sketches and diagrams in Science	Sketches or diagrams are inaccurate	Sketches or diagrams may be untidy or missing labels	Sketches or diagrams are neat, accurate and clearly labelled	Colour is used where appropriate, and the sketches or diagrams help the reader understand the concept studied
Professional Pathways in schools	Few staff within the school have completed their Professional Engagement Process  Some Presentations of Learning have successfully been completed for Teachers	Some staff within the school have completed their Professional Engagement Process  Presentations of Learning are inconsistently completed	Most staff within the school have completed their Professional Engagement Process  Presentations of Learning have successfully been completed for Teachers	All staff within the school have completed their Professional Engagement Process  Presentations of Learning have successfully been completed for both Teaching and Non-teaching staff

## When we get this right...

*‘I joined Green Top at the age of 16. I have worked my way through the professional pathway with support from my colleagues and leaders. I am really proud to say that I am now a Stage 9 Headteacher within the XP School Trust.’*

Kelly Overson | Principal | Green Top School

*‘The engagement calendar supports me to plan for trust and school wide priorities cohesively. As a school leader I am reassured that my leaders are supported and challenged by their peers as well as the executive team, whilst ensuring that the school voice is not lost in wider projects. There is a balance of workshops and crew networks with a focus on school improvement priorities. The Trust engagement calendar allows me to forward plan and learn from other schools in the trust. This has been pivotal in my organisation and productivity as a new headteacher.’*

Claire Salter | Principal | XP and XP East Schools

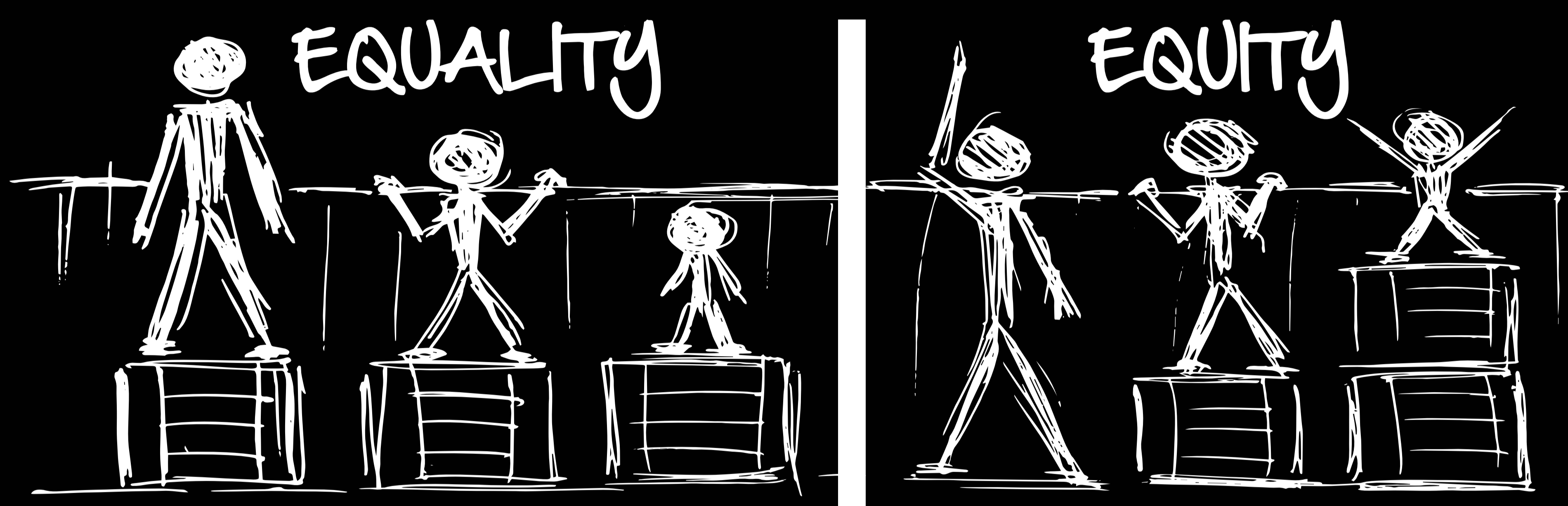


# and Equity...

‘What do we need to be the best version of ourselves?’

## Our ‘Narrative for Success’

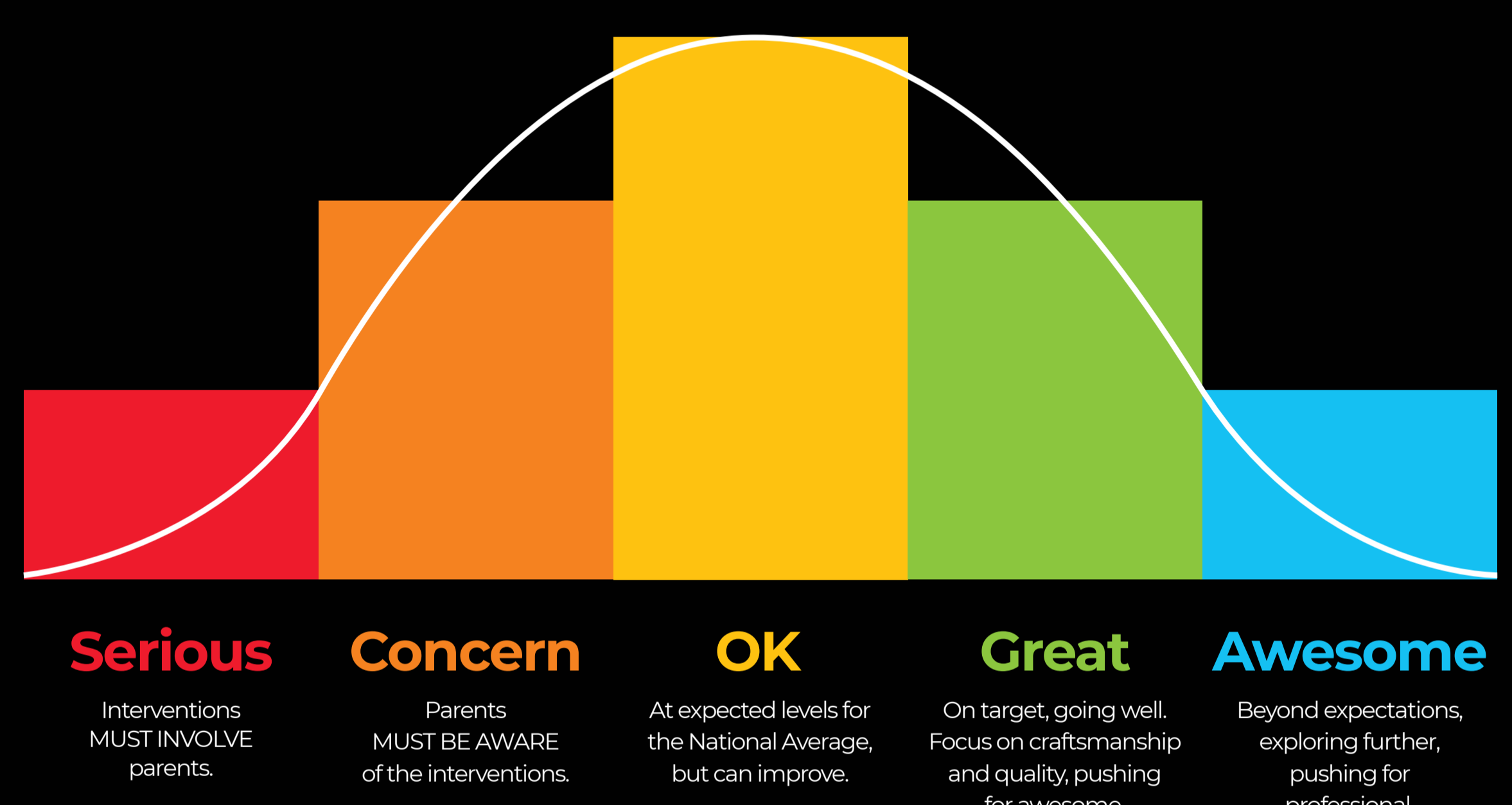
We engage with our students and staff in a certain order to ensure effective equitable impact. We call this our Narrative for Success. We use this equitable process to strive for equality.



## Are we...

<b>1 Safe?</b>	Keeping our students and staff safe is our number one priority. We ensure this is always at the forefront of our minds by publishing a weekly 'Near Miss' register, a list of things that have happened that risked a safeguarding issue, but that we have mitigated against (such as late registers etc)
<b>2 Engaging?</b>	We lower the barriers to learning equitably by providing our students and staff what they need, appreciating that we are all different and from different starting positions. We strive to ensure our learning expeditions hold interest and our teaching is great.
<b>3 Attending?</b>	Every day at school matters for both students and staff, and we raise the importance of attendance every week in our community meetings celebrating the winners of our weekly attendance league!
<b>4 Working hard, Getting smart, Being kind?</b>	To be the best versions of themselves our students need to work hard, get smart and be kind. Our Habits of Work and Learning (HoWLS) are tracked in all sessions, including crew. We talk about what our HoWLS look like every day, and we 'catch' students doing good, promoting good behaviours to create a positive culture.
<b>5 Performing academically?</b>	Academic performance is one of our 'three dimensions' and very important to our school. Putting this last in our narrative is not diminishing its importance, it is saying that it is a consequence of 'being safe, engaging, attending, working hard, getting smart and being kind. This is why the narrative is an ordered list of engagement.

We track all aspects of the narrative to answer this simple question...



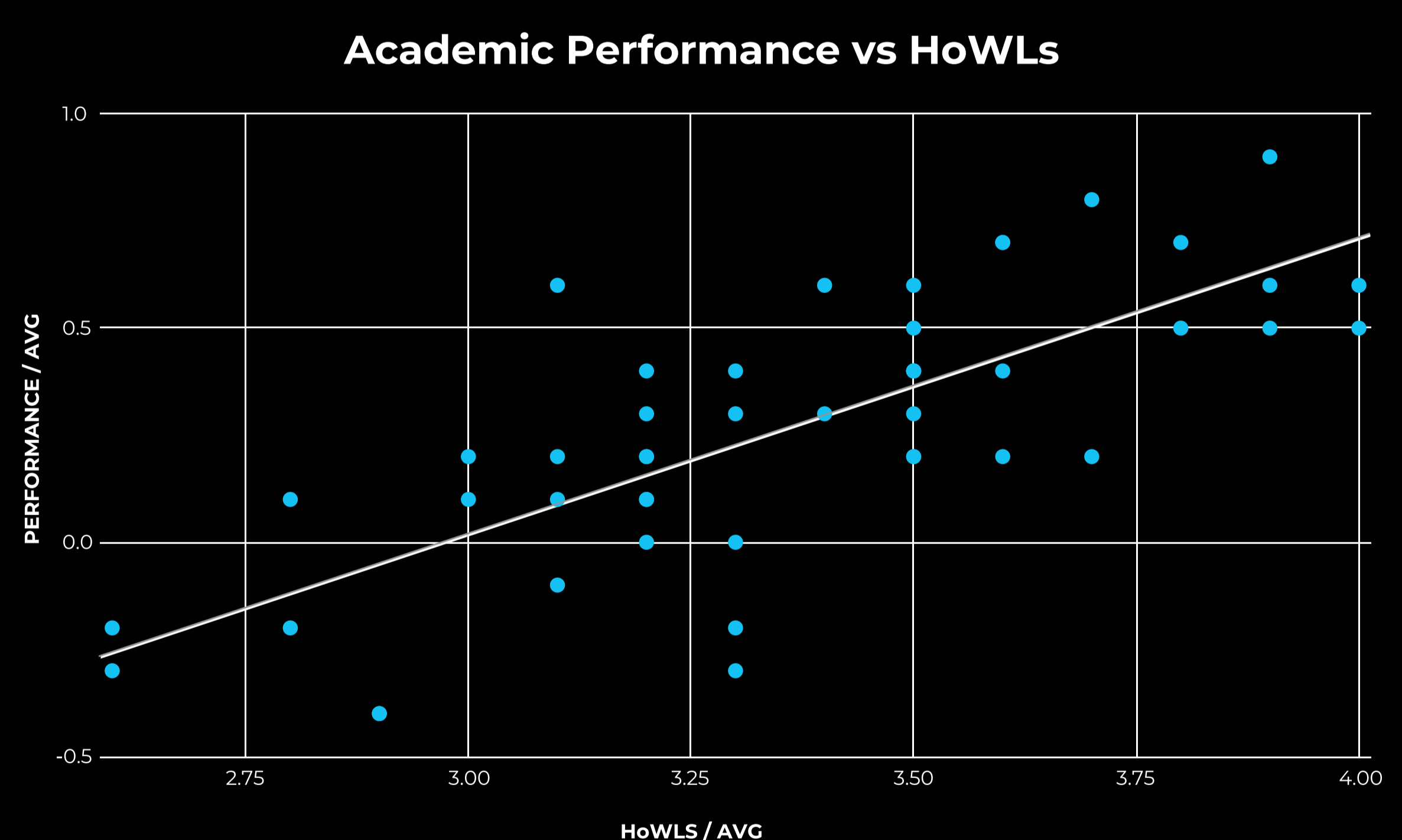
## The impact of our narrative for success

Measuring attendance and Habits of Work and Learning, we can see a clear and strong correlation with academic performance. The more kind you are, the better you will perform academically.

Similarly, just giving students more maths questions will not make them better at maths if they are not attending school in the first place.

Our narrative for success ensures we are focusing our efforts on the interventions that will have the most impact on our students.

As what is good for our students is good for us, we use the same ordered list when supporting our staff.



## What makes a successful community?

A community succeeds because of its differences. At XP, we celebrate this and use the power of crew to achieve more than we thought possible throughout our school. As such, we do not segregate our students according to ability, and our students stay in their mixed-performance crews and classes from Year 7 until they have graduated at the completion of their GCSEs and their 'Final Word' presentations.

This takes great professional care and skill in planning highly differentiated expeditions and individual lessons to meet the needs of all our students who share the same classroom whatever their destination after XP, whether it be an apprenticeship or place at the best universities in the world.



## When we get this right...

*'Since my son started at XP his academic progress has significantly improved. He has also faced other issues which XP have guided him through. Life lessons, how to deal with issues whilst maintaining his integrity, and also owning mistakes he has made. He has grown all round as a person and I am very happy.'*

XP Parent

*'XPE has provided the most fantastic support to both my child and myself since he joined in September. The staff go above and beyond to ensure his needs are met. The relationship that we have with the school is one of mutual respect, staff really listen to me and recognise my expertise around my child and mirror strategies that are successful. This supports me in offering a consistent approach which is incredibly important to him.'*

XP East Parent

xptrust.org



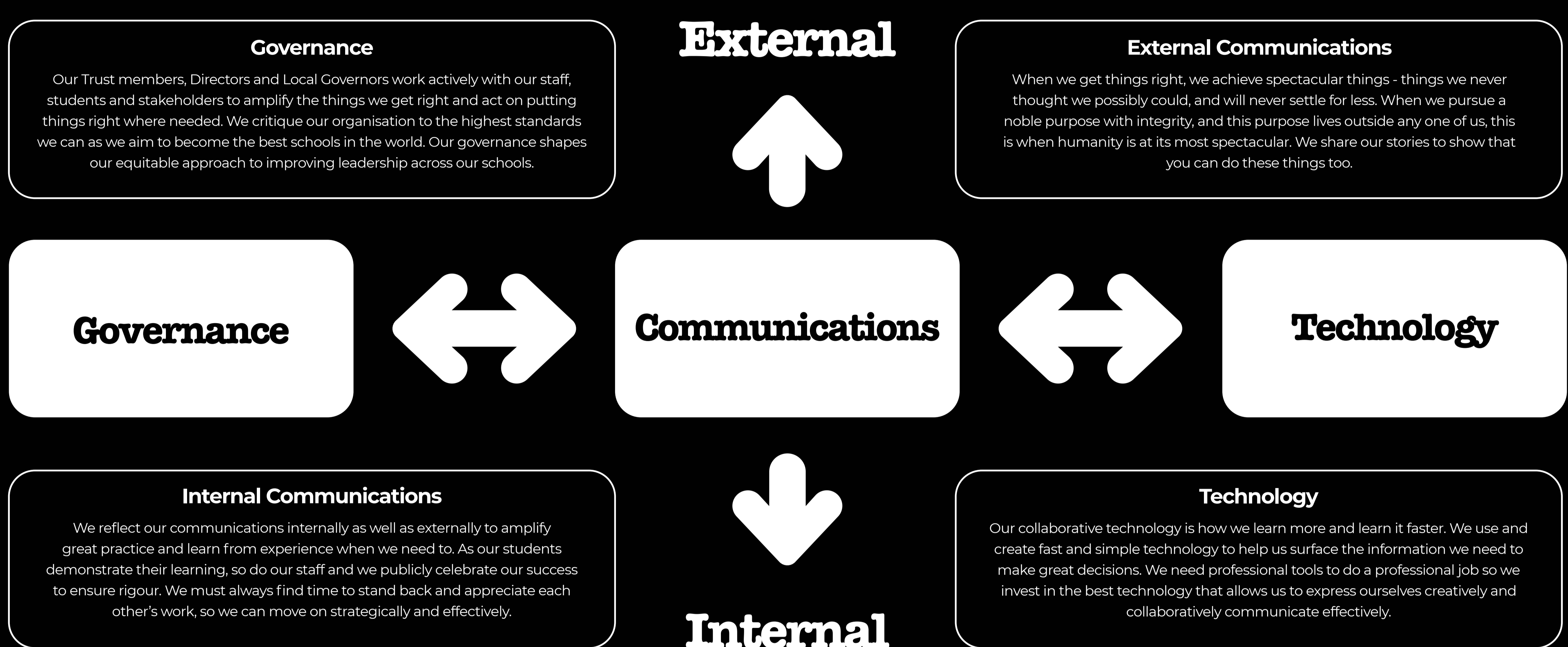
# ...sharing our stories as we go.

## ‘How are we doing the right things, in the right way, with the right tools...?’

Our communications, both externally and internally demonstrate how things look when we get it right, to our stakeholders and ourselves.

Our active governance ensures that we are amplifying our stories when we get things right, and acting on putting things right when we don't.

Our collaborative technologies allow us to learn more and learn it faster, enabling our great work to reach more people effectively.



## Everything we do can be aligned to our Design Principles. They define our culture.

Design Principles	Building our community	Activism	Leadership	Equity	Sharing our stories
<b>Abstract</b>	Operational	Powerful Knowledge	Learning to Lead	A Narrative for Success	Strategic
<b>Trust governance</b>	Finance, Legal, Facilities & Risk Management	Curriculum	Performance	Wellbeing	Governance, Communications & Technology
<b>School</b>	School Environment, Stewardship	Beautiful work	Academic Performance	Character	School Voice, Community Engagement
<b>Student</b>	Dress code, Equipment & Devices	Work hard	Get Smart	Be Kind	Public celebrations (SLC, CoL, Psg)
<b>Our 3D approach</b>		<b>Hand</b> The things we do	<b>Head</b> How we learn to do them	<b>Heart</b> How we look after each other	

We simplify what we do through this alignment, creating our 'big picture'. Our guiding questions are asked at every level of our organisation, from students through to directors. This gives us clarity and focus on why we do what we do, from the abstract concept to the concrete example, enabling us to say...

## ‘...and this is what it looks like when we get things right...’



### You can do this too!

To delve deeper into these concepts and access all our content for you to adopt and adapt, go to [www.xptrust.org](http://www.xptrust.org)



[xptrust.org](http://www.xptrust.org)



**‘At XP Trust,  
we build our community  
through activism,  
leadership and equity,  
sharing our stories  
as we go...’**

# **These are our Design Principles**



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R Pountney'.

**Dr Richard Pountney**  
Chair of XP Trust

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephen Bielby'.

**Stephen Bielby**  
Chair of Board of Directors

