

AWESOME

THE DEVELOPMENT OF
'AWESOME LEADERSHIP' AT
ELEVARE CIVIC EDUCATION GROUP



INTRODUCTION TO OUR LEADERSHIP CULTURE

I am delighted to introduce our Awesome Leadership Framework.

With this, we are capturing a moment in time; preserving the values and shared experiences that have evolved across our Education Group over many years, and which will continue to guide us as an organisation.

Across our college, multi-academy trust and charitable foundation, we have spent many years building a shared culture and way of working that we feel should be recognised and passed on. This Framework enables us to tell that story, creating a legacy we hope will inspire and support our future leaders.

In reflecting on my own leadership journey, I am reminded that my most valuable lessons have come from lived experiences; colleagues who have challenged, inspired and supported me, and students whose resilience and courage continue to shape my purpose.

Leadership, to me, is an ongoing commitment to learning. I have drawn inspiration from many different approaches and together, they have strengthened my belief that effective leadership is grounded in values with a focus on empowering others.

For our current leaders, this is a call to action: what we model today will shape the generations who follow. As new colleagues join us with fresh perspectives and expertise, we must protect the cultural legacy that makes Elevare unique, while also giving ourselves the freedom to evolve.

This Framework does both - capturing who we are today and futureproofing our organisation. Ultimately, our role is to ensure that our impact is sustained. By defining what leadership looks and feels like across Elevare now, we are strengthening our ability to transform lives through the power of learning, for today and for the future.



Dr Sam Parrett CBE

Group Principal and CEO

Elevare Civic Education Group



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Awesome Leadership Framework is designed to supplement and further establish the distinctive and unique leadership culture across Elevare Civic Education Group. It moves beyond traditional leadership development, serving as a cultural framework that connects the Group's civic mission to the lived experiences of students, staff, stakeholders and communities. The framework aims to nurture authenticity, hope, community and shared purpose, making leadership a collective act of transformation and ensuring the impact of today's leaders endures for future generations.

The framework is fully aligned with Elevare's vision to 'Transform Lives through the Power of Learning.' It supports the Group's strategic goals by:

1. Empowering leaders and staff to embody authenticity, excellence, hope, community and collective purpose.
2. Strengthening Elevare's identity and reputation as an established civic anchor institution.
3. Integrating with key strategic projects (such as Project Aspen) and the Elevare Leadership Academy, to further operationalise the framework through structured pathways, coaching, and cross-group learning.
4. Strategically aligning to the Group's strategic goals and core purpose

The Awesome Leadership Framework

- Builds and further develops a sustainable, values-driven leadership culture that endures beyond individual tenures.
- Fosters environments where staff and students flourish, communities feel connected and the Group's mission is lived daily.
- Celebrates awesomeness through collective storytelling, reflection and visible practice, moving beyond traditional recognition schemes.
- Supports succession planning, innovation and resilience, ensuring Elevare remains an employer and education provider of choice.
- Inspires ongoing excellence, confidence, hope and trust, demonstrating humility and humanity in leadership.

In summary, the framework is not a rigid structure but a living guide, developing our existing models, to shape a leadership culture that is authentic, inclusive and future-focused, with a legacy that continues to benefit the organisation and the communities it serves.



CONTEXT: ELEVARE CIVIC EDUCATION GROUP

Elevare Civic Education Group is the umbrella organisation that comprises, London South East Colleges, London South East Academies Trust and Elevare Education Foundation.

The Group rationale is borne from a shared mission, vision and values. It seeks to optimise governance alignment through a Group Strategy and provide efficiencies across the organisations.

Built on charitable principles and a co-incidence of interest, the Group ethos is founded upon high-quality teaching and learning, the development of curriculum models fitting each school and cohort, and a core and bespoke school improvement strategy which focuses on our shared strength.

The strategic and operational working relationships between the College, Trust and Foundation have been established to optimise collaboration and integration - and to reflect both the next stage of our journey and our growing civic mission.

Elevare - meaning to elevate or uplift - captures our mission to raise aspirations and opportunities, while Civic signals our responsibility and commitment to being an anchor institution, at the heart of our communities.

LSEC is the Sponsor of the Trust, supporting it with business infrastructure and professional services across a number of business operations.

Since 2018, the College and Trust have operated within a Group Governance structure that is underpinned by their mutual charitable principles and co-incidence of interest. This benefits the strategic positioning of the Group Organisations as anchor institutions and place makers within London and the South East. The development and implementation of Elevare Education Foundation, as a Company Limited by Guarantee a registered charity, is as a charitable foundation created to support and exist alongside the College and Trust.

London South East Colleges (LSEC) (the College) is a multi-campus educational institution, formed from the merger in August 2016 of Bromley College of Further & Higher Education, Greenwich Community College and Bexley College. The college is dedicated to a core role in ensuring that learners in its sub-region of South East London and surrounding areas, have access to high quality, integrated education and training, at all levels and across the maximum range of subjects.

London South East Academies Trust (LSEAT) (the Trust) is a Multi Academy Trust, sponsored by LSEC. The Trust currently comprises a mixed portfolio of schools including mainstream primary, specialist and alternative provision - providing high quality education and training across Bromley, Bexley, Lambeth, East Sussex and Surrey.

Elevare Education Foundation is a charitable foundation, created to support the College and Trust through fundraising, philanthropy, research and development.

Following a review of progress towards our Group strategic goals in 2023/24, and the last year of our social enterprise strategy, we were able to report that we had delivered over £150m of independently verified social value since 2019. This contributed to the social and economic mobility of children and families in the communities we serve, and through this, increased social justice.

During 2024/25 we focused on implementing and changing our policy and practice to achieve our new strategic goals and ambitions through to 2030. The vision of our Group Strategy 2024-2030 is to Transform Lives through the Power of Learning: ***We believe that education changes communities for the better.***

Our Mission is: ***We provide leadership, knowledge and resources to unleash the power of learning as an agent for social change.***

A Group Leadership Team was created in September 2024, consisting of senior leaders from across the Trust, College and professional services department. In May 2025, a Group Project Management Office was created to lead and drive five key strategic projects to support the achievement and ambitions of the Group strategic goals. The Projects link and correlate directly to the strategic ambitions of the Group, with a focus on the following areas:

- i. **Project Galaxy**
SEND and transition planning
- ii. **Project Mayflower**
AI and Immersive Technologies
- iii. **Project Aspen**
People Culture and Wellbeing
- iv. **Project Vector**
Developing an Organisational Research Culture
- v. **Project Laser** – for fund raising activities and sponsorship through the new charitable foundation.

Each of the five strategic projects is led by a member of the Group Leadership Team.

As outlined above, for more than a decade we have cultivated our organisational identity and built deep roots in our communities. We have developed a strong reputation, first as a social enterprise and now as a civic organisation. This legacy underpins an organisation that takes sustainability and succession seriously, that endures beyond individual tenures, and that welcomes new ideas and energy as part of its ongoing development.

Our emerging Awesome Leadership Framework grows directly out of the way we have led over the past ten years. It captures the spirit, intent and behaviours that have already shaped our work and reflects the authenticity, shared purpose and community focus that define the way we lead. It is more than a leadership development programme. It is a cultural framework that connects Elevare Civic Education Group's civic mission to the lived experience of our students, staff, stakeholders and communities.

By nurturing authenticity, hope, community and shared purpose, Elevare treats leadership as a collective act of transformation. The impact of our leaders is already felt across our organisation and wider communities, and this framework helps that impact endure. We are evolving from recognition schemes like Stars to celebrating awesomeness in our current practice and future leaders. We are also creating space for collective storytelling and reflection to inspire ongoing excellence, confidence, trust and humility in how we lead.

The Awesome Leadership Framework captures our lived values and behaviours through relationships rather than transactions. It reflects our journey and expresses who we are, shaping the stories that define and sustain our culture. It now sits at the heart of the Elevare Civic Education Group's mission to transform lives through the power of learning.

We are capturing and defining a leadership philosophy that brings our mission, values and strategic priorities to life. It strengthens our commitment to investing in people, celebrating diversity and developing evidence-informed cultures of innovation and collaboration. The Elevare Leadership Academy plays a key role in supporting this work and ensuring the philosophy is applied consistently across the organisation.

Our strategic goal is to sustain a leadership model that empowers leaders and staff to embody authenticity, community and collective purpose, reinforcing our identity as an anchor and civic institution.

Our Awesome Leadership Framework implementation plan is aligning our leadership culture with the strengths we have established over the last decade. Seven key descriptors sit at the core of this work. They bring to life and energise the behaviours and values that run through the organisations that make up the Elevare Civic Education Group.

To support a cohesive leadership culture, we continue to invest in the Elevare Leadership Academy as the Group's professional development infrastructure. It spans early career, middle leadership, senior and executive roles, offering structured pathways, a coaching culture and cross-group learning. This ensures that Awesome Leadership is not only defined but lived every day.

More information on the Elevare Leadership Academy is provided in Appendix 2.

OUR VALUES AND STARS

The Awesome Leadership Framework has been designed to reflect and build upon the values and culture already well established across London South East Colleges and London South East Academies Trust. It draws on the STARS frameworks that define expected behaviours within each organisation and uses them as the foundation for a shared model of leadership and professional identity across the Group.

The STARS frameworks capture the shared values that define the Group's culture. Both express the same belief in collaboration, accountability, respect and ambition, while reflecting the different contexts in which the College and the Trust operate. Integrating these into the Awesome Leadership Framework allows those values to be experienced consistently by staff, learners and communities across every part of the organisation.

Within the College, STARS has become the behavioural foundation for staff at all levels. It focuses on how individuals live the values through teaching, teamwork and service, and how they take ownership for improving the learner experience. In the Trust, STARS plays a similar role, defining the expectations for all staff and showing what good looks like in practice, whether in classrooms, support functions or leadership teams. While the emphasis in schools is more directly linked to pupil outcomes and community service, the intent mirrors that of the College: to build an environment where people feel part of something purposeful and high performing.

The Awesome Leadership Framework brings these two interpretations together by providing a single model for how STARS values are developed, led and sustained. It translates the language of STARS into leadership behaviours that can be observed, coached and refined across both settings. The framework does not replace STARS but deepens it, turning the values into a pathway for leadership growth and cultural coherence. Through the Elevare Leadership Academy, this alignment will be embedded in professional development, coaching programmes and appraisal conversations, ensuring that leadership practice across the Group reflects a shared standard of authenticity, empowerment and continuous improvement.

This approach creates one cultural identity across the Group while allowing each organisation to retain its distinctive focus. It connects the professional ethos of the College with the educational mission of the Trust, ensuring that staff across both feel part of a common purpose. In doing so, the integration of STARS within the Awesome Leadership Framework strengthens not only how we describe our values but how we live them through every interaction and decision.

THE AWESOME FRAMEWORK:

What “Awesome” Really Means for our Schools and College Leaders

AWESOME as a Culture

The emerging Awesome Leadership Framework is supported by seven pillars and descriptors. Each of these express the behaviours and values that bring the Awesome Leadership Framework to life. They build on our shared history as a successful social, public, economical, civic provider of education that transforms lives and communities.

Awe as a Sense of Purpose and Wonder

The word awesome literally means inspiring awe - a feeling of reverence, respect or admiration. In education, being awesome isn't about perfection or power; it's about evoking a sense of wonder in others. It's when:

- Staff feel proud to work in your organisation.
- Students feel seen, supported and inspired.
- Communities feel connected to something bigger than themselves.

Awesome leaders remind others why education matters. They help people feel the mission, not just know it.

Awesome as Authenticity

“Awesome” leadership begins with being genuinely yourself - consistent, transparent, and values-driven. In an era of change and scrutiny, authenticity is a quiet act of courage.

- It's showing humility as well as strength.
- Admitting when you don't have all the answers.
- Leading in a way that reflects who you are, not just the role you hold.

Awesome leaders model wholeness, not just competence.

Awesome as Impact

An awesome leader makes real things happen. Not through ego or control, but through empowerment, trust and clarity of purpose. They create the conditions where staff and students can flourish. They make mission visible in everyday action. Ask: “If someone shadowed me for a week, what would they say my mission is, based on what I do, not what I say?”

Awesome is the alignment between purpose and practice.

Awesome as Heritage and Continuity

In our context, heritage adds depth to “awesome.” It’s about standing on the shoulders of those who built the foundation and ensuring that legacy continues. Being awesome here means:

- Honouring your institution’s story.
- Recognising the educators who came before you.
- Using history as a springboard for innovation.

Awesome leaders are our guardians of heritage and the architects of our future organisation.

Awesome as Energy and Positivity

The best leaders bring an energy that lifts others. Even in times of difficulty, they find the spark; the sense of purpose that keeps teams going. Being awesome doesn’t mean being relentlessly cheerful; it means bringing hope, belief and momentum.

Awesome is the emotional climate we create all around us.

Awesome as Collective, Not Individual

AWESOME as a Leadership Framework

Combining our behavioural culture with our leadership experience gives us a framework for how we lead our organisation together. We do this by being:

- *Authentic*
- *Wholehearted*
- *Empowering*
- *Strategic*
- *Optimistic*
- *Mission-led*
- *Elevating*

AWESOME is more than an acronym - it’s a way of leading with confidence and from the heart. It describes the mindset and behaviours of leaders in our organisation all of whom are:

- rooted in heritage
- driven by purpose
- inspired by possibility

Awesome leadership happens when authenticity meets mission, when we lead in ways that inspire awe, belonging, and belief. This is the lived experience of staff across the organisation.

Each letter of AWESOME captures an essential leadership principle that supports the visionary, people-centred and adaptive practice that the Elevare Civic Education Group is known for. This is explained further below.

A - *Authentic: "Be real. Be grounded. Be you."*

Awesome leaders lead from their values, not their titles. They show vulnerability, humanity, and courage, modelling integrity in every decision. They remember that authenticity builds trust, and trust builds transformation.

W - *Wholehearted: "Lead with clarity and care."*

Leadership in education is demanding and emotional work. Wholehearted leaders prioritise wellbeing, build trust, and create environments where people feel safe, valued and able to perform and grow sustainably.

E - *Empowering: "Great leaders don't create followers – they create other leaders."*

Empowering leaders trust their teams, give others a voice, and celebrate potential. They lead with inclusion, not instruction, believing that leadership is a shared act, not a solo performance.

S - *Strategic: "Purpose with direction."*

Awesome leaders balance heart with head. They connect mission to action, honouring heritage while deliberately innovating for the future. They use insight and evidence to adapt, improve and deliver sustainable progress.

O - *Optimistic: "Hope is a leadership strategy."*

Optimistic leaders believe in possibility, even in challenge. They turn ambition into clear priorities, choices and plans. Their confidence is grounded in strategic thinking, helping others move forward with clarity and purpose.

M - *Mission-Led: "Heritage gives us our roots. Mission gives us our wings."*

Awesome leaders never lose sight of why they lead. They honour the past while shaping the future — carrying forward the values, traditions, and stories that make education sacred work.

E - *Elevating "Legacy is what we lift and sustain."*

Elevating leaders raise people, standards and culture in ways that last. They focus on building excellence, care and purpose that can be carried forward, knowing that meaningful leadership impact continues well beyond the moment and the individual.

At Elevare, AWESOME is not about being the hero leader. It's about building awesome teams, awesome cultures, and awesome futures. It's shared - not owned. When a leader is truly awesome, it's because everyone around them starts to shine more brightly.

AWESOME IS WHAT HAPPENS WHEN LEADERSHIP IS CONTAGIOUS

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

The strategic intent of Awesome Leadership is to provide a foundation on which we can continue to build upon our cohesive leadership culture, grounded in authenticity, wonderment, purpose, and collective endeavour to enable us to futureproof our leadership DNA and ensure consistency.

The framework seeks to further connect leadership practice directly to the civic mission of the Group enabling staff, students and stakeholders to feel proud, connected and supported. This is through sustainable bonds and a shared understanding of our moral and social purpose as educators and civic leaders, and our mission to transform lives through the power of learning.

This concept once implemented, reframes leadership not as positional authority but as a shared act of influence and servitude. It will continue to build and connect to the Group's social enterprise ambition, to use learning as an agent for social change, modelling leadership that is transparent, community-rooted and future-focused.

In essence, Awesome Leadership represents the embodiment of the Group's values:

- **Lead Locally:** Leaders act as civic anchors and champions of community value.
- **People First:** Every decision begins with inclusion and wellbeing.
- **Act Responsibly:** Integrity and humility define interactions.
- **Continuously Innovate:** Curiosity and reflection drive improvement.
- **Fearless Pioneers:** Courage and hope underpin leadership behaviours.

The Elevare Leadership Academy operationalises this intent by nurturing leaders grounded in our STARS values, Flourishing Leadership principles, and evidence-informed practice. The Academy's developing leadership pathways are already beginning to align fully with the components of the Awesome Framework, offering a clear progression route that grows authentic, empowering, mission-led leaders across the Group.

Project Aspen, one of our five key projects delivering on Elevare's strategic goals through to 2030 (please see Appendix 3 for the information on the other projects), is aligned to support and endorse the Awesome Leadership Framework through its project outcomes and strategic ambition to

- i. fully embed the Group People and Culture Strategy
- ii. leverage research-based evidence to enhance people practices, staff development and organisational culture
- iii. strengthen our reputation as an education provider and employer of choice, nationally and locally.



"Experience is the source of fresh knowledge in the way whereas we try to learn."

"I have more books than I have paper!"


LEARNING

Nothing ever comes of nothing.


"The best, the best, is not in our world, but in another, that is an paradise!"


How to...
The...
The...
The...

EACH PILLAR OF THE AWESOME LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK CAN BE MAPPED TO ELEVARE'S STRATEGIC GOALS.

People First:

Our people, both staff and learners are amazing. They are talented, committed and they care. It is only through their hard work that we achieve our success

Goal 1: We will invest in our people to ensure that every person feels valued, recognised, and rewarded, and has the support they need to achieve their best in an inclusive organisation which fosters diversity.

Performance and Practice:

We want the very best for our staff, our learners and the communities we serve. We want them to thrive. That's why we will focus on evidence informed performance and improvement. We will ask, 'how well we are doing?' and 'what do we need to do to continue to improve' every day in every way, helping us to collectively ensure a sustainable future.

Goal 2: We will embed a culture of research and innovation which fosters improved outcomes for all learners, supports organisational resilience and pioneers positive change in education system wide.

Prosperity and Place:

Place matters. It's in our names, and part of our identity, our reason for being. Based in and part of our communities, we play a key role in civic life. It's a responsibility that we take seriously. We know place-based inequalities in England are long established and deep-rooted. We want to play our role, leading locally as an education provider and major employer, in helping address these.

Goal 3: We will maximise our assets, resource and expertise to effect positive change locally, driving towards net zero, developing social capital, enabling sustainable and inclusive growth in the communities we serve.

STRATEGIC THEMES

Awesome Framework Pillars	People First	Performance and Practice	Prosperity and Place
Authentic	<i>Builds trust, inclusion, and wellbeing; values-driven leadership</i>	<i>Models integrity and evidence-informed improvement</i>	<i>Strengthens community trust and reputation</i>
Wholehearted	<i>Fosters compassion, connection, and belonging</i>	<i>Creates safe, supportive cultures for growth</i>	<i>Inspires collective pride and engagement in local communities</i>
Empowering	<i>Develops talent, celebrates diversity, and gives others a voice</i>	<i>Builds organisational resilience and shared responsibility</i>	<i>Strengthens community capacity and civic engagement</i>
Strategic	<i>Connects people to purpose and vision</i>	<i>Links mission to everyday action; drives improvement and innovation</i>	<i>Aligns organisational assets to effect positive local change</i>
Optimistic	<i>Inspires hope, confidence, and resilience in staff and learners</i>	<i>Fuels progress and engagement; sustains momentum</i>	<i>Builds optimism and resilience in the wider community</i>
Mission-led	<i>Ensures everyone understands and lives the Group's purpose</i>	<i>Embeds values and traditions in daily practice</i>	<i>Positions Elevare as a civic anchor and leader in education</i>
Elevate	<i>Focuses on sustainability, succession, and legacy</i>	<i>Creates cultures of excellence and continuous improvement</i>	<i>Leaves a legacy of shared success and positive community impact</i>

DEVELOPMENT PHASE AND NEXT STEPS

The development phase of building this framework began with conceptual discussions between the Group Leadership Team. We explored how Awesome Leadership could represent as a cultural mindset and a developmental programme to both build and reflect our journey and lived values. We looked at how it could serve as a tool to support the recruitment, retention and further development of our organisation, in order to futureproof and protect it.

Early considerations included

- Defining the concept through collaborative dialogue and reflection on lived experiences
- How to develop a lived experience index to measure and evaluate our collective impact
- How to integrate with Project Aspen, the organisation's behavioural and leadership framework
- Research and evidence review, to identify and modify the awesome effects of leadership and emotional intelligence within our context
- Consider opportunities to co-design and capture, reflect and build a leadership culture uniquely reflecting the change makers and culture shapers who have helped guide our development – this includes past, present and future leaders
- How to tell the story and consult, gathering examples of leadership excellence from across the organisation
- Designing and conceptualising visual and interactive tools, such as an 'Awesome Wall' and digital storytelling assets through podcasts or other media to help embed and "live" those values and behaviours.

The first phase that we are entering is intentionally reflective and exploratory in order to ensure that the framework evolves organically and is grounded in the lived experience of our staff and leaders.

Our Elevare Annual Leadership Conferences will bring to life "the awesome effect" and will help us to capture the belief that when people lead with vision, purpose and authenticity, they create an effect - inspiring colleagues, transforming learners and strengthening our communities.

It's not just about being awesome; it's about what happens because of it.

The Elevare Leadership Academy will provide the learning architecture for this work and will include a range of coaching, mentoring, structured programmes and cross-group collaboration opportunities, which will motivate, empower and elevate leaders to explore, test and refine Awesome Leadership behaviours in real practice. It will be a living framework of change and thoughtful leadership.



OUR THEORY AND LEGACY FOR CHANGE

The Awesome Leadership Framework is built on a dynamic theory of change that connects organisational transformation with human experience. It draws on both established and contemporary models to explain how culture develops through reflection, collaboration and shared purpose.

These theories of change emerged and subsequently have been ingrained and remain within our DNA, purpose and practice. As an organisation rooted in transformational and connected leadership and culture, the Group has continued to grow, develop and evolve in scale and reputation. This was demonstrated by our hugely successful three-way College merger in 2016, where our One College philosophy created and nurtured a collaborative culture and communities of practice, streamlining processes and systems, and creating a sense of belonging and pride.

The Trust, established in 2014, has grown and developed over the last ten years to become an organisation with strong and cohesive leadership, with a sense of purpose, pride and belonging, nurtured through a One Trust philosophy. Strong leadership and governance have been recognised by key stakeholders including Ofsted, the DfE and Local Authorities. This has resulted in a strong reputation as a values-based education group, rooted in our communities and dedicated to educational excellence for all.

Using theories such as Kotter's (1996) eight-stage model we have been able to provide strong foundations, highlight the importance of building urgency, forming coalitions and embedding new ways of working into our leadership culture.

More recent thinking recognises that change is not a simple sequence but a continuous process of learning and adaptation. Higgs and Rowland (2020) describe this as change leadership through connection, where progress is achieved through trust, dialogue and shared accountability rather than control. This understanding of leadership sits at the heart of the Awesome Leadership Framework, which views leadership as something that grows within teams and relationships, not simply as a function of hierarchy.

We have applied Michael Fullan's (2001) work on how leading in a culture of change reinforces this approach. This theory places moral purpose, learning and relationship-building at the centre of sustainable improvement. Fullan argues that real change depends on coherence, helping people to make sense of complexity and to find shared meaning in their work. This idea is central to the Awesome Leadership Framework, which seeks to connect people to the mission and values of the organisation while supporting them to learn and grow together.

We have recognised that change also depends on how people respond emotionally and behaviourally. Tuckman's (1965) model of team development remains a useful way to understand how groups move from forming to performing. Belbin's (2010) work on team roles adds another dimension by showing how teams become more effective when they recognise and value diverse strengths and working styles. The Kübler-Ross (1969) Change Curve helps explain the emotional journey that often accompanies transition, and Grant (2021) highlights that leaders who demonstrate empathy and openness build the trust and confidence that people need to move through uncertainty.

Leadership development sits at the core and heart of our organisations. Coaching, mentoring and reverse mentoring all play a key role in sustaining change and shaping culture. Coaching helps leaders to reflect and translate learning into action. Mentoring connects individual growth with organisational continuity. Reverse mentoring deepens understanding across differences and encourages inclusion, empathy and curiosity. Together these approaches create a feedback loop that keeps the organisation learning, responsive and people centred.

Our leadership philosophies throughout have been aligned to servant leadership. This is where we have focused on prioritising growth, wellbeing and development of the Group, practising active listening and empathy and a commitment to empower others.

As a values-led organisation, Elevare Civic Education Group has created an environment where people can flourish, foster trust, collaboration and a shared sense of purpose. In the context of the Awesome Leadership Framework, servant leadership is reflected in the focus on humility, service and community-rooted leadership, ensuring that leadership is a collective act that uplifts and empowers everyone involved.

In this model, change is not treated as a one-off project but as an ongoing process of renewal. The Elevare Leadership Academy provides the structure to make this real by giving leaders the space to think, experiment and learn together. Through this approach, Elevare remains agile and forward-looking while staying grounded in the lived experiences and ambitions of its people.

IMPLEMENTATION PHASES AND PLAN

The implementation plan from now until 2030 is structured around engagement, communication and integration.

Key activities in Year One will include:

- A. Launch Conference (Year 1):**
A flagship 'Awesome Leadership Summit' to introduce the framework.
- B. Integration with the Group's Professional Development Offer:**
Aligning the Elevare Leadership pathways and programmes, coaching, performance reviews, NPQ suite, Teaching Skills Academy, support staff pathways, within the Elevare Leadership Academy provision (see Appendix 2)
- C. Media and Storytelling:**
Launching "the Awesome Effect" podcast and visual campaigns celebrating lived examples.
- D. Cultural Embedding:**
Creating physical and digital spaces to make leadership values visible
- E. Evaluation and Legacy Planning:**
Using research and staff feedback to refine the framework annually.

Evaluating the Awesome Leadership Framework is about more than measuring outputs; it is about understanding how leadership behaviours, relationships and culture evolve over time. The process will balance evidence and reflection, providing a rounded picture of progress that captures both individual growth and organisational impact.

Over the coming months we will develop a three-year evaluation model, that adopts features of Kirkpatrick's (1998) four-level model, which provides a useful foundation. This will allow us to consider the experience of participants, what they have learned, how they apply that learning, and the outcomes. The first two levels focus on engagement and understanding, exploring how leaders respond to development opportunities and the extent to which new insights influence confidence and skill. The third level examines how these behaviours are lived out in practice, particularly in demonstrating authenticity, collaboration and purpose. The final level looks at the wider organisational effect, considering indicators such as staff engagement, retention, performance and alignment with Elevare's civic values.

This model is supported by more recent work that places emphasis on cultural and behavioural change. Phillips and Phillips (2016) propose a fifth level of evaluation that considers return on expectations, capturing how leadership programmes meet strategic goals and stakeholder intent rather than just financial outcomes. Similarly, the Institute for Employment Studies (IES, 2022) highlights the importance of evaluating long-term impact through stories of practice, coaching records and evidence of cultural shift. This approach recognises that the real value of leadership development lies in sustained behavioural change and the quality of relationships it strengthens.

Evaluation within Elevare will focus on the impact of our leadership development activity and the extent to which it strengthens our culture, behaviours and strategic priorities. It will draw on both quantitative and qualitative evidence, including structured feedback, reflective journals, focus groups, coaching evaluation data and performance metrics linked to the People and Culture Strategy. The Leadership Academy will bring this information together in an annual review, using insights to refine programmes and shape future leadership priorities. External benchmarking, including partnership work with the Education and Training Foundation, will help maintain rigour and credibility.

By embedding evaluation within the learning process, the organisation reinforces a culture of reflection and accountability. The aim is not simply to prove impact but to improve practice continually. Through this approach, the measurement of success becomes part of the same learning culture that the Awesome Leadership Framework seeks to create.

As outlined above, an Annual Leadership Summit and Conference will be hosted by Elevare. Awesome Leadership will be celebrated, principles and methods reinforced, evidenced-based research and resources explored, and culture transformation shared. The theme of the conference will differ every year aligned to each of the seven pillars of the Awesome Leadership Framework.

ELEVARE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

The newly established Elevare Leadership Academy will provide the developmental infrastructure that allows the Awesome Leadership Framework to become the lived expression of our leadership culture. It is not a new concept, but a way of bringing together the progress we have already made across the Group into one coherent place, creating space to consolidate our strengths and cross fertilise opportunities for learning and flourishing. Built on our Elevare STARS values and the Flourishing Leadership model, the Academy supports the Awesome attributes of authenticity, wholeheartedness and being mission led, ensuring that every aspect of development begins with self-awareness, humanity, hope and purpose.

The Elevare Leadership Academy fosters shared leadership, collective action and rejects positional hierarchy. These principles support the growth and leadership capacity at every level - from aspiring to executive - building organisations where everyone can lead.

The Elevare Leadership Academy reinforces continuity through a structured pathway which articulates a leadership culture that is grounded in Elevare's civic mission and built to be sustainable. In essence culture-shaping leadership that models authenticity, empowerment and civic purpose. The Awesome Leadership Framework is not conceptual; it becomes a developmental backbone supporting STARS across LSEC and LSEAT.

The Elevare Leadership Academy's partnerships (NPQs, ETF, AoC, NIoT, Forum Strategy) will serve as the formal learning partnerships that support Awesome Leadership. Providing the credibility, standards and research-informed evidence that strengthen the Group's ambition to become a civic anchor institution.

Coaching and mentoring are central to how leadership is developed and sustained across Elevare. Building on Jenny Rogers' work (2021; 2023), coaching is seen both as a professional discipline and as a leadership mindset. Her Manager as Coach approach highlights that effective leaders create a culture of reflection and accountability through active listening, empathy and skilful questioning. Leaders act as thinking partners, enabling others to find clarity and build confidence through dialogue rather than direction. This style of leadership strengthens trust and autonomy across teams.

Alongside this, Elevare recognises the importance of independent professional coaching. Working with accredited coaches provides a confidential and structured space for senior and emerging leaders to test ideas, explore challenges and develop deeper self-awareness. Combining this external perspective with an embedded coaching culture ensures that development is continuous, reflective and focused on both personal and organisational growth.

Goleman's (1998) work on emotional intelligence complements this approach, identifying self-awareness, empathy and social skill as the foundations of effective leadership. More recent studies, such as Halliwell, Mitchell and Boyle (2023), show that leaders who adopt a coaching mindset demonstrate stronger authenticity, adaptability and self-efficacy, leading to improved performance and engagement. The CIPD (2023) similarly highlights that leadership programmes rooted in coaching principles produce more sustained behavioural change than traditional training models.

Within Elevare, the Leadership Academy brings this approach to life through accredited pathways and structured development programmes. It equips managers to lead through coaching and provides access to external professional coaching when deeper, specialist support is needed. Mentoring complements this by offering structured guidance, constructive challenge and continuity between roles and career stages. Reverse mentoring also plays a valuable role in building inclusion and mutual understanding. It allows senior leaders to learn directly from colleagues with different lived experiences and perspectives, supporting a culture of humility, curiosity and shared accountability.

Through this collective approach, coaching and mentoring become the living expression of the Awesome Leadership Framework. They turn authenticity, empowerment and purpose into everyday habits, helping leaders at all levels to learn through conversation, reflection and connection. This focus on relational growth ensures that leadership development remains personal, inclusive and sustainable.

The Elevare Leadership Academy will provide and reinforce Awesome Leadership across support staff pathways linked to the service values and the collective with the principle that leadership is not confined to the classroom or executive level, but distributed across all professional service areas.

The Elevare Leadership Academy will support the Annual Leadership Conference, which will bring emphasis on our heritage and purpose, our collective storytelling, emotional climate and innovation and curiosity.

These events will become central to embedding the values of the Awesome Leadership Framework and ensure it remains visible and celebrated. Further details on the Elevare Leadership Academy Programmes are in Appendix 2.

IN SUMMARY

Awesome Leadership is more than a leadership development programme, it is a cultural framework that connects Elevare Civic Education Group's civic mission to the lived experience of students, staff, leaders and stakeholders.

It is our organisational legacy that will build an enduring organisation. It focuses on sustainability and succession planning, with hope that continues beyond individual tenures and new ideas and energy being continually embraced and developed.

We will continue to nurture authenticity, community, and a shared purpose. Elevare is embedding leadership as a collective act of transformation, ensuring that the impact of today's leaders is sustained in the generations that follow, and that there is consistency in our approach across the Group.

The Awesome Leadership Framework is not a rigid structure but a living guide to a leadership culture that fills us all with awe and wonder. It calls each of us to lead with clarity, compassion and conviction, and to create the conditions in which others can do the same. As we embed this way of working across the Group, we set a clear direction for the future: leadership that is authentic, rooted in our values and unwavering in its commitment to our people and our communities. This is how we will leave a lasting legacy.

APPENDICES



Appendix 1: Literature Review

Literature Review: Foundations for the Awesome Leadership Framework

The development of the Awesome Leadership Framework at Elevare Civic Education Group is grounded in a rich tradition of leadership theory and research. This literature review synthesises key academic perspectives that inform the framework's design, ensuring it is both contextually relevant and evidence based.

- A. Transformational Leadership:** Transformational leadership, as articulated by Bass and Riggio (2006), emphasises the role of leaders in inspiring and motivating followers to achieve higher levels of performance and personal development. Transformational leaders articulate a compelling vision, foster intellectual stimulation, and attend to the individual needs of their followers. The “Awesome” pillars - such as inspiring awe, fostering empowerment, and aligning mission with practice - reflect transformational leadership's focus on vision, motivation, and the development of others.
- B. Authentic Leadership:** The concept of authentic leadership, advanced by Avolio and Gardner (2005), underscores the importance of self-awareness, relational transparency, and values-driven action. Authentic leaders are genuine, ethical, and consistent, building trust and credibility within their organisations. The Awesome Leadership Framework's emphasis on authenticity, humility, and modelling values aligns closely with this tradition, positioning authenticity as foundational to effective and sustainable leadership.
- C. Distributed and Collective Leadership:** Recent scholarship has shifted from viewing leadership as the domain of a single individual to recognising its collective and distributed nature (Spillane, 2006; Bolden, 2011). Distributed leadership highlights the importance of shared responsibility, collaboration, and the mobilisation of expertise across an organisation. The Awesome Leadership Framework's focus on collective endeavour, shared purpose, and team-based leadership is underpinned by this body of research.
- D. Servant Leadership:** Greenleaf's (1977) servant leadership model advocates for leaders who prioritise the growth and wellbeing of their followers and communities. Servant leaders are characterised by humility, empathy, and a commitment to serving others. The Awesome Leadership Framework's focus on humility, service, and community-rooted leadership draws directly from servant leadership principles.
- E. Emotional Intelligence in Leadership:** Goleman (1998) identified emotional intelligence as a critical component of effective leadership, encompassing self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. The “energy and positivity” and “wholehearted” pillars of the Awesome Leadership Framework reflect the importance of emotional intelligence in creating positive organisational climates and fostering resilience.
- F. Learning Organisations and Continuous Improvement:** Senge's (1990) concept of the learning organisation emphasises the importance of continuous learning, reflection, and adaptation. Leaders in learning organisations foster cultures of inquiry, innovation, and shared learning. The Awesome Leadership Framework's commitment to evidence-informed practice, innovation, and collective reflection is consistent with this approach.

Bob Garratt's (2010) concept of the “learning organisation” complements Senge's model, particularly in its emphasis on governance, reflection, and self-renewal. Garratt views learning organisations as living systems that thrive through double-loop learning, where assumptions are challenged and new thinking emerges. This has strongly influenced the Group's approach to reflective practice and cultural self-awareness, where leadership is understood as a collective process of sense-making and adaptation. Garratt's perspective reinforces Elevare's belief that a thriving organisation learns both from success and from challenge, embedding continuous improvement as a cultural habit rather than a compliance exercise.

- G. Dynamic Capabilities and Organisational Agility:** Teece's (2007) theory of Dynamic Capabilities explains how successful organisations sense opportunities, seize them, and reconfigure their resources to remain adaptive. Although grounded in private-sector research, the concept has been applied across public and educational settings where adaptability and resilience are essential. Eriksson (2021) argues that in civic organisations, dynamic capability relies less on market competition and more on shared learning, trust, and social capital.

Recent studies reinforce this broader interpretation. Wilden, Devinney and Dowling (2016) highlight that dynamic capability depends as much on leadership culture and people-centred values as on structural systems. Similarly, Loureiro et al. (2021) note that dynamic capability in the public sector is strengthened when reflection and collaboration become embedded cultural habits rather than isolated initiatives. These perspectives connect directly to the ethos of the Awesome Leadership Framework, which views adaptability as a collective behaviour shaped through authenticity, empowerment, and purpose.

Within Elevare, dynamic capability is expressed through a culture of curiosity and learning rather than formal hierarchy. The Elevare Leadership Academy supports this by creating reflective spaces where leaders can test and refine ideas, ensuring agility enhances rather than disrupts stability. Interpreted in this way, Teece's model is reframed for a civic education context where adaptability is an ethical and values-driven strength that sustains organisational endurance.

- H. Civic and Place-Based Leadership:** The role of educational leaders as civic anchors and agents of social change is increasingly recognised in the literature (Fullan, 2001; Grint & Holt, 2011). Place-based leadership connects organisational purpose to community wellbeing and social justice. The Awesome Leadership Framework's focus on civic mission, community engagement, and place-based impact is informed by this scholarship.

The Awesome Leadership Framework being developed at Elevare Civic Education Group is rooted in a synthesis of transformational, authentic, distributed, and servant leadership theories, enriched by insights from our own emotional intelligence, organisational learning, and civic leadership research.

By integrating these perspectives, the framework offers a robust, evidence-informed approach to leadership development that is both innovative and awesome.

Appendix 2: Elevare Leadership Academy

Overview

The Elevare Leadership Academy has been created to nurture confident, values-driven people across the Elevare Civic Education Group. It offers a clear framework for professional growth, connecting learning opportunities, qualifications and collaborative experiences at every stage of a career.

The Academy is built around three dimensions of leadership development:

1. Self-Leadership- developing personal effectiveness, confidence and professional identity
2. Leading People and Teams - building leadership capability and creating thriving teams that embody our shared values
3. Leading Across Boundaries - influencing beyond individual roles to shape culture, collaboration and system leadership

Our investment in leadership development is strengthened by strategic use of the apprenticeship levy, which funds a wide range of accredited qualifications and pathways across the Group. This approach ensures that professional development is accessible, sustainable and aligned to workforce priorities.

Together these dimensions reflect our belief that great leadership begins with self-awareness, grows through relationships and extends to the wider organisation and community.

Section 1: Self-Leadership

Our Leadership Model

Elevare is grounded in our shared STARS values. These guide how we work, how we lead and how we serve our communities. The Academy helps staff put these values into practice and connects them to the Group's People, Place and Prosperity strategy.

Our approach is based on the principles of Flourishing Leadership: growth that begins with self-awareness and extends through purpose, relationships, learning, resources and wellbeing. Self-leadership is about curiosity, integrity and reflection. It means taking responsibility for one's own development and creating conditions for others to succeed.

Teaching and Learning Development

For colleagues working in teaching or learning support, the Elevare Leadership Academy links directly with our Teaching Skills Academy in the College and the Routes into Teaching framework in the Trust. These ensure that every teacher and assessor has access to structured professional development, mentoring and reflective practice that builds confidence and classroom excellence.

Many of these qualifications and training routes are funded through the apprenticeship levy, ensuring that teachers and assessors can gain accredited qualifications without personal cost while contributing to workforce sustainability.

Teaching Qualifications

All teaching and assessing staff are expected to hold a recognised teaching qualification within two years of joining. Managers identify unqualified staff and support them to complete the relevant qualification with remission and protected study time. This may include Learning and Skills Teacher Apprenticeships, which provide a funded route to qualification. Mentors within departments guide this process and support professional reflection.

Routes into Teaching

We offer several structured routes into teaching across the Group, including:

- Post-Graduate Teaching Apprenticeships (PGTA) – fully funded and employment-based
- Learning and Skills Teaching Apprenticeships for FE Lecturers
- School Direct and SCITT programmes through Bromley Schools Collegiate and Surrey South Farnham
- Foundation and Top-Up Degrees for Teaching Assistants through the National Institute of Teaching and the University of Buckingham
- A Professional Studies Course for unqualified teachers, introducing evidence-informed teaching practice

Support Staff Development

Support staff play a vital role in making Elevare a great place to work and learn. Whether in administration, IT, estates, finance, student support or within our schools, every role contributes directly to learner success and the strength of our communities.

Development at Elevare is not defined by job title. Initiative, collaboration and accountability are everyday forms of leadership that support staff demonstrate continually. The Academy helps staff recognise and develop these qualities through:

- Short courses and online modules
- Apprenticeships funded through the levy such as Business Administration, Customer Service, Team Leading and Project Management
- Local CPD sessions, skills workshops and mentoring

Progression Pathways

Development is flexible and inclusive:

- Foundation Pathway: building confidence and professional identity
- Practitioner Pathway: deepening technical or role-specific skills
- Leader Pathway: preparing for management or cross-team responsibility

Each pathway reinforces the STARS values and supports progression at every level. The apprenticeship levy supports these routes, allowing staff to gain accredited qualifications while remaining in their roles.

Coaching and Mentoring for Self-Development

Self-leadership begins with reflection and purposeful growth. Coaching and mentoring are offered to all staff who want to develop specific skills, strengthen confidence or prepare for new responsibilities.

Every new teacher or assessor is paired with a trained mentor during their first year, and coaching is available at any stage to explore particular aspects of practice. Coaching conversations are confidential, developmental and focused on growth rather than assessment.

Staff interested in becoming accredited coaches or mentors can access coaching and mentoring qualifications funded through the apprenticeship levy, ensuring the development of a strong internal network of skilled professionals.

Section 2: Leading People and Teams

The Elevare Leadership Pathway

The Elevare Leadership Pathway supports colleagues at every stage of their career. It provides a clear structure for leadership development that builds capability, confidence and connection across LSEC and LSEAT.

Each level of the pathway aligns with national professional standards and the Flourishing Leaders framework. It recognises that leadership is both a role and a behaviour, and that everyone contributes to a positive and effective culture.

Aspiring Leaders

For colleagues exploring leadership for the first time. This stage builds self-awareness, confidence and an understanding of personal leadership style.

Key features include:

- The Aspiring Leaders Programme, a five-week series focused on communication, motivation and teamwork
- Introduction to the Flourishing Leaders domains of Purpose, Relationships, Learning, Resources and Wellbeing
- Reflection on how personal values influence leadership style
- Opportunities to connect with peers across LSEC and LSEAT
- Participants are encouraged to explore Level 3 and Level 5 leadership apprenticeships, providing a funded route into early management training through the apprenticeship levy.

Middle Leaders

For those responsible for teams or curriculum areas. This stage focuses on leading through others and creating a positive team culture.

Key features include:

- Access to the Management Skills Academy and Leadership and Management Apprenticeships (Levels 5-7) funded by the levy
- External leadership programmes through the ETF, AoC and other sector providers
- Development in coaching and mentoring, performance management and leading through change
- Progression routes to the National Professional Qualification (NPQ) suite
- Peer coaching and collaborative learning opportunities across the Group

Senior Leaders

For experienced leaders with cross-team or cross-college responsibilities. This stage develops strategic thinking, influence and cultural leadership.

Key features include:

- Sponsored executive coaching aligned with the Flourishing Headteacher and System Leader models
- Focus on vision, influence and sustainable leadership
- Skills in resource planning, communication and decision-making
- Access to Level 7 Senior Leader Apprenticeships and relevant FE leadership programmes through levy funding
- Engagement in professional networks such as Forum Strategy and the AoC
- Team Development and Collaboration

The Elevare Leadership Academy provides tools and experiences to strengthen team relationships and performance. These interventions are designed to help teams reflect, connect and thrive.

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Team Profiling and Development

Belbin-accredited practitioners support teams to understand their strengths, roles and working styles. Sessions highlight how individuals complement one another and how to collaborate more effectively.

Group Coaching

Facilitated coaching sessions help teams reflect on challenges, build trust and identify practical solutions. Group coaching promotes shared responsibility and collective growth.

Team Building and Away Days

The Academy supports departments and services to plan purposeful activities that reconnect teams, clarify purpose or navigate change. All sessions are grounded in the STARS values and focus on collaboration, wellbeing and shared success.

Developing Managers as Coaches

Management coaching is a core leadership skill. Through the Core Leadership Programme and designated CPD sessions, all middle and senior managers are trained to use coaching approaches in their leadership practice.

For those wanting to deepen their expertise, coaching and mentoring apprenticeships are available through levy funding. This ensures that managers can develop professionally accredited coaching skills that strengthen their leadership impact.

Recognising and Growing Talent

Developing others is a defining feature of leadership. Every manager is expected to identify, support and stretch talent within their teams, providing opportunities for learning, progression and collaboration.

Talent discussions and development planning are part of the performance review process, ensuring that every colleague has access to fair and transparent growth opportunities. The apprenticeship levy supports this process by enabling structured, accredited development for staff at all stages of their career.

Section 3: Leading Across Boundaries

Executive and System Leadership

Leadership across boundaries is about influence, collaboration and shaping the culture and strategy of the wider organisation. The Elevare Leadership Academy supports colleagues who lead across schools, colleges or external partnerships to act as system leaders with integrity and purpose.

Executive Leaders

For those leading at Group or system level, this pathway develops strategic leadership that shapes culture and direction across multiple organisations.

Key features include:

- Access to Flourishing System Leader and Flourishing Trustee programmes
- Participation in NPQ Executive Leadership and Level 7 Executive Coaching and Mentoring Apprenticeships
- Collaboration with the National Institute of Teaching (NlOT) and Forum Strategy
- Bespoke coaching, mentoring and action learning sets
- Opportunities to contribute to the Elevare Leadership Academy as mentors, facilitators or speakers

Executive leaders model the values, vision and standards that define the Elevare Group. They help build the trust and collaboration that underpin a civic approach to education and community impact.

Cultural Leadership and Champions

The Elevare Leadership Academy supports the development of cultural leadership across the Group, recognising that our culture is one of our greatest strengths. This work links closely with Project Aspen, which underpins our approach to strengthening culture, leadership and engagement.

Aspen focuses on creating a positive and inclusive workplace culture where people feel valued, connected and supported to perform at their best. Through the Academy, these principles are translated into daily practice. Leaders at all levels are encouraged to act as culture carriers, building belonging and trust through the way they lead and interact.

The Cultural Leadership strand includes:

- Leaders as Culture Champions promoting People and Culture priorities
- Culture Labs exploring inclusion, wellbeing, recognition and workload
- Cultural Leadership Framework integrated into all leadership pathways
- Aspen Exchange platform for sharing insights and shaping future priorities

Cultural leadership is not a separate initiative but a way of working. It shapes how we treat one another, how we make decisions and the experience we create for learners and communities.

Talent Management and Succession Planning

The Elevare Leadership Academy plays a central role in how we identify, develop and retain talent across the Group. This aligns with the Talent and Succession Strategy 2025–2030 and Project Aspen. Together, these frameworks ensure that our approach to leadership development is strategic, inclusive and sustainable.

Our commitment to maximising the apprenticeship levy underpins this strategy. The levy funds accredited leadership and management apprenticeships at all levels, as well as professional and coaching qualifications, ensuring that staff can progress through supported, high-quality pathways.

Coaching and Mentoring

Coaching and mentoring are central to leadership development and cultural growth across LSEC and LSEAT. They help build capability, reflection and trust, creating an environment where people can think, learn and lead well.

Every leader is expected to use coaching and mentoring as part of their practice. Coaching focuses on performance and problem-solving, while mentoring supports longer-term development and career direction. Both are grounded in trust, curiosity and shared learning.

Through the apprenticeship levy, staff can access formal qualifications in coaching and mentoring, enabling them to become accredited practitioners within our internal coaching pool. This ensures a sustainable model where skills are developed internally and shared across teams.

Reverse mentoring, adapted from the Senior Executive Link and Reverse Mentoring Programme, continues to play an important role. Less senior staff and students mentor leaders, providing valuable insight into lived experience and helping shape a more inclusive culture.

Leadership Conference and Network

The Elevare Leadership Academy hosts a Leadership Conference each year, bringing colleagues from across LSEC and LSEAT together to explore innovation, learning and leadership in civic education. The event also launches the Elevare Leadership Network, a community of practice that encourages shared learning and collaboration throughout the year.

Governance and Funding

The Elevare Leadership Academy sits within the Group's wider CPD and Talent Strategy, aligned with the People, Place and Prosperity framework. The apprenticeship levy is a key funding stream for this work, supporting leadership, management, coaching and teaching qualifications across all levels. Programmes are supplemented by CPD budgets and external partnerships.

The Elevare Leadership Academy represents a shared commitment to helping people flourish with colleagues who are grounded in values, connected by purpose and determined to make a lasting difference across our communities.

Appendix 3: Strategic Projects at Elevare Civic Education Group



