

One Education Limited

Business Plan 2025-2028



1. Overview

Mission

One Education is a value-led organisation, passionate about supporting schools, communities, families and other settings to support children. With a breadth of skills, specialisms and industry knowledge, we really do make a positive difference to the educational settings and children we work with - we believe in educational excellence for each and every child.

Our core values

Integrity

Our services act with integrity and confidentiality at all times. With a commitment to raise standards in education, we will only offer solutions that respond effectively to school needs, confident that our support will enhance and further each educational establishments aims and objectives.

Independence

One Education proudly offers independent and impartial advice and support. We work exclusively and discreetly using evidence-based strategies and research to inform all our services to best serve each school, their children and their wider communities.

Intervention

Prioritising child centred outcomes, all our interventions and consultancy services place young people and their needs at the centre of our work. Our services pride themselves in working in partnership to resolve complex challenges and create better opportunities for children.

The Education Sector

The education system in England has undergone substantial and prolonged change over the past decade. The sector is experiencing a significant shift driven by policy reforms, technological advancements, and the evolving needs of students and educators. Whilst the sector is innovating, adapting, and striving for equity, it faces ongoing challenges related to funding, staffing, and access. The number of children in schools in England has increased to nearly 9.1 million. This includes all state-funded and independent schools of which there are over 24 thousand educational establishments.

Sourcing high quality goods and services in the education sector is becoming increasingly difficult; countless regulations, fragmented processes and tighter budgets are just a few issues encountered by educational establishments of all types across the UK. Being a successful school supplier is a lot more than just having the best products and services. The field is incredibly competitive, so it is important to take advantage of what sets One Education apart from the competition. The education sector is a people business that is formed on trust and relationships underpins everything One Education does.

The unique appeal of One Education is the variety and synergy of the portfolio of services we offer, supporting school leaders, school staff, parents and carers and other agencies to achieve the best for every child.

2. About One Education

Established in 2011 One Education is a trusted partner supporting schools, MATs, communities and families to transform children's outcomes. We believe in educational excellence for each and every child.

For nearly 14 years the organisation has been a proud partner to schools, academies and social organisations delivering our unique range of services to help address the challenges the everchanging education landscape presents. Providing a range of children and business-related services we are proud to support world-class teaching in schools, trusts and other agencies across the country.

Our services are made up of dedicated school leaders, teachers and school business managers together with highly qualified and practiced professionals. With expertise in every aspect of education, we lead the way in supporting school leaders and driving school development. Working with over 600 schools and trusts, we are immensely proud of all that we have achieved to enhance learning environments and experiences.

One Education is truly passionate about empowering the next generation to achieve their full potential. We build on our success through strong, lasting relationships with schools, trusts, and other partner agencies to never compromise on our mission to create brighter futures for all.

Currently around 85% of the organisation's activity is based in the City of Manchester. There are approximately 250 primary and secondary schools in the city, a mix of maintained schools, academy/trust member schools and independent. Initially, the organisation was spun out of Manchester City Council in 2011 with the focus purely on continuing 'traded services' for schools exclusively within the city. This quickly changed over the years, meaning the location and type of organisations the organisation interacts with and supports has organically grown wider which in turn adds to the depth of knowledge and integrated solutions on offer.

The wide variety of services led, developed and delivered by our experts clearly demonstrates our ability to support and contribute to improving the school experiences of children and young people. One Education offers the high-quality intervention, curriculum and school improvement support services that make each of our educational settings and other partner agencies the best place they can be.

It is our privilege to work alongside our colleagues in education, health and social care and our staff pride themselves on quickly being seen as part of a school or trust, much more than just a service provider; a valued member of the school team working closely with them across several disciplines and supporting each educational setting on its journey of improvement and achievement.

This business plan draws out the challenges facing the organisation and sets the priorities and areas of focus for the next three years. The success with which we bring together improving children's experience in schools by supporting and delivering our wide variety of services continues to be our driving force across the city and region.

Putting children first.

3. Governance and Leadership

The Board

The organisation is monitored, regulated and governed by a Board of Non-Executive directors who meet four times per year for the Chief Executive and Core Executive to report progress on financial and tertiary issues affecting the organisation and the education market.

Current Board members

Angela Harrington NED – MCC, Chris Wanley NED – MCC, Debra King NED – Music/charities, Deborah Lucas NED - HR & People, George Whaley NED – Finance.

The Executive Team

See appendix 3a

Our Executive Management Team consists of our Chief Executive, two Directors and three Heads of Service, including 2 of the largest services; Music and Educational Psychology, who specialise in managing different parts of the organisation.

Each individual has specialist knowledge, bringing credible expertise from working within the sector and their unwavering commitment to help One Education provide excellent services for all our customers.

Stuart Fern Chief Executive Officer

Stuart joined One Education in 2016 from the Higher education sector and brings with him 30 years of finance management experience across financial services, manufacturing and engineering to most recently a university background. His areas of expertise are business processes, data as information and leading growing organisations through periods of change and development.

Mark Seddon Director of Business Development and IT

Mark has over 20 years of experience in ICT and over 10 years in Programme Management across areas such as Health, Energy, Government and education. He previously worked for Northgate delivering whole school ICT under the Building Schools for the Future scheme. Mark is focused on delivering ICT services that are education and children outcome centred. He joined One Education in 2012

Rachel Foster Director of HR and Education Strategy

Rachel is an employment solicitor and CIPD HR professional. She has for many years worked in the education sector both as a lawyer and as a senior HR advisor. Rachel has represented schools, academies, local authorities and governing bodies in risk management, employment tribunals and other litigation, exit strategies and succession planning. She has vast experience in assisting school leaders

Rob Merino
Executive Head of Service –
Governance and Compliance

Before joining One Education, Rob had an extensive career in local authority service management and delivery, followed by a number of years as a programme and change management professional. As Head of Governor Services, Rob provides advice, guidance and support to head teachers and chairs across the region, and has managed the successful delivery of a new free school through application and pre-opening stages.

Adam Cooke
Executive Head of Service –
Music

Adam studied music at the University of Manchester before being awarded a scholarship to the Guildhall School of Music in London. As a conductor, Adam has worked with leading ensembles across Europe, including tenures as Musical Director of the Fairey Band and resident conductor of Stavanger Brass Band in Norway. He has also been a guest conductor with several national youth ensembles, including Ulster Youth Orchestra, National Youth Brass Band of Great Britain, and the South African National Youth Wind Orchestra.

Dr Sarah McIntosh
Executive Head of Service –
Educational Psychology

Sarah is a HCPC registered Principal Educational Psychologist at One Education. She has an extensive background in education including experience of teaching in secondary and Post-16 sectors. Sarah is passionate about using psychology to make a positive difference for children and families. Sarah's professional and research interests include trauma-informed practice, critical incident response, mental health and working in multi-disciplinary teams. She has published research in the field of adoption.

Wider Leadership Team

See appendix 3b

Petra Pratt
Head of School Finance

Vanessa Pomeroy
Head of Pupil Attendance & Safeguarding

Jo Gray
Head of Educational Development

Helen Marriott
Head of Inclusion

Katie Dillon
Head of HR & People

Jeni Goodfellow-Pemsel
Head of Creative Psychotherapy in Education

Dan Smith
Head of IT

Janine Nixon
Head of Marketing and Engagement

Audrey North
Head of Payroll Service

Matt Postlewaite
Head of Finance

Linda Mason
Head of Internal HR

4. People Strategy

Our first dedicated People Strategy was launched in 2025. It represents One Education's ongoing commitment to enable employees to feel they belong, are valued and can continue to grow in their professional knowledge. At the heart of One Education is our people.

The People Strategy shapes the organisation's relationship with our employees. This strategy depicts our organisational approach to attract, develop, retain and inspire our workforce and is underpinned by our organisation's values.

We have approximately 200 staff delivering internal corporate support and across all the 11 school facing services on offer. Staff are drawn from a variety of disciplines and professions:

- Business professionals
- Teachers, SEND, SaLT, Inclusion, Literacy, Music
- Educational Psychologists
- Therapeutic Intervention practitioners
- Music instructors
- Safeguarding leads
- Educational/curriculum/improvement professionals

One Education staff are our most important asset and we aim to be the best place to work, where colleagues are empowered and able to excel in their roles for the benefit of the schools and organisations we work with and most importantly the children we put first. To achieve this, we will ensure all staff are supported to achieve their goals and the whole organisation operates with an agility and flexibility to accommodate change as priorities emerge.

Our People Strategy has four strategic themes setting out the organisation's ambitions and areas of focus to develop, embrace and support the One Education's culture:

- Employer of choice
- Flexible and sustainable employer
- Multi skilled adaptable high performing people
- Compassionate, engaging and inclusive organisation

One Education wants to maintain a learning culture within our services where professional development, staff wellbeing and staff retention are prioritised to enable to continue to deliver trusted expertise with thought leadership and innovation with a child first ethos.

5. Marketing Plan (In Operation dated 2024)

This strategic document has been updated from previous versions of the One Education Marketing Strategy during the life of One Education. It provides an overview of our current market position, relationship with customers and our planned Sales & Marketing approach.

One Education provides a multitude of professional support packages developed directly for schools, multi academy trusts and other agencies. All our specialist services aspire to have a significant, positive impact on the education of children and young people, improving both children's outcomes and the learning experience in their educational settings.

Our services include: Academisation, Safeguarding, School Finance, Education Psychology, HR, Payroll, Music, IT, School Improvement, Governance Support, Educational Welfare, Marketing, Therapeutic Intervention Support, Literacy, EYFS, SEND and SaLT.

We consistently respond to the changing environment of the education sector to ensure schools/MATs have what they need at the time they need it most. The benefits from choosing One Education as a service provider are:

- Multi-disciplinary support services
- Expert knowledge in the education sector and specialist areas
- Local and national support offered in person and virtually
- Independent perspective on educational issues
- Large teams for consistent reliable & high-quality support
- Collaborative cross team knowledge and working
- Value added resources through our members area

Summary of our current market

The majority of One Education's current customers are primary and secondary schools with a presence in higher education, nurseries, special school provision, PRUs, Adoption Services, hospital schools and directly to local authorities to support their schools, children and parents. The percentage of our customer base that are MATs is approximately 21% across the organisation as of the day of this Business Plan. The ICT Service also deals with non-education customers (albeit in an education setting) such as building contractors where we have delivered ICT products and services to new school builds and expansion programmes.

As an organisation we operate in a number of educational settings, including but not limited to:

- Schools
- Academies
- Multi Academy Trusts
- Local Authorities
- Free Schools
- Youth Centres
- Probationary Services
- Alternative Provision
- Specialist and Resource Provisions
- Nurseries and PVI's
- Community Settings
- Post-16 Colleges

Although One Education operates primarily in the GMCA & Northwest region, we work with schools across the UK.

See appendix 5a for Operational Maps

Marketing goals

Our change in marketing approach and profile reflects our evolution from an organisation heavily reliant on MCC contracts to one that obtains the majority of its income direct from educational establishments and other agencies.

In order to position ourselves for the acquisition of more MAT business, One Education needs to implement a commercial model that will allow us to discount across multiple services in a single transaction. This will help us offer multiple services at the same time to a MAT (or similar group of schools).

Marketing Main 3 Objectives:

Lead generation

Identifying strategies to support new lead generation and opportunities to conversion. Development of a more sales focused website and the introduction of new digital strategies i.e. prospecting and retargeting, social media investment, enhanced analytics to measure user engagement and develop appropriate strategies and keep warm strategies to support movement down the sales funnel.

Retaining current customers

Due to the Government plans to continue with a trust led education system, capitalising on and strengthening the loyalty of current customers is imperative. With a key focus on retention strategies including development of an ambassador network, One Education awards and where new leaders/Trust heads have arisen with current customers to solidify existing relationships and explain about One Education offerings. In parallel, repositioning One Education not in competition with MAT core services but complimenting their internal resource offering quality assurance and acting as a 'critical friend'.

Growth of services with current customers

Retaining our customer base is also fundamental and developing a customer profile and behavioural analysis of our main customers will create opportunities to upsell and cross-sell other service with the aim to increase the percentage of schools who purchase more than one service.

One Education's brand extends beyond the logo, it is about the organisation's values, vision and quality of all the services provided. Our strong brand identity helps reinforce One Education's values and culture.

6. Strategic Plan

In order for One Education to achieve its objectives and priorities we need to ensure procedures, processes and financial outcomes are robust and effective. This business plan is the foundation that sets out the operation and financial imperatives for the three-year period it covers.

Whilst significant financial pressures in the education sector remain, the plan seeks to manage resources and deliver an effective and efficient operation at an achievable level of surplus.

After numerous discussions at strategic level at referencing many key source documents (MCC Education Strategy, ACE Music Strategy, DfE policy and guidance, One Education's own Risk Register, Marketing Strategy and People Strategy etc) it has been agreed that the organisation is strategically focused upon:

'One Education being a forward-thinking organisation that not only anticipates but shapes the educational landscape and is a first choice for schools and agencies in the education sector'

Any sustainable business should be able to deliver under three 'states': Survive, Reset and Thrive.

i) **Survive** (e.g., stabilise when the market presents challenges)

The profile for One Education's business plan income includes particular focus on renewal of core SLA business at 90% reconfirmed – a history of retention One Education is proud to hold. The SLA renewals are key to planning as they provide a guaranteed order book and cashflow foundation for the plan. Overall, 93% of customers are retained - the challenge in the plan is to maintain this 90%+ level. SLAs are key across most services with Music, IT and Schools HR having particular focus on them along with EP having the largest SLA commission from MCC currently in its fifth (of seven) year.

Corporate target 2028: 90%+ level of retention retained

ii) **Reset** (e.g., change shape and offer in response to the market)

There is an increased focus on changing the mix of sales to schools and MATS – although slowing down, schools joining MATs is a significant threat to the organisation's delivery to smaller schools and federations and represent the majority of its current customer base. The plan requires a focus on restating service

offers to support MATs from regional, national or religious organisations. Services designed to de-risk for MATs, like employing individuals or where expertise within the organisation outweighs what a MAT would have from one or two individuals are both key elements to winning MAT business. Ongoing discussions with MAT leaders are fundamental to pitch the appropriate delivery models and re-inventing / creating new products and services that are appropriate for the changing educational landscape.

In last 3 years MATs now account for around 60% of school pupil numbers and half of all schools. Our core area of Greater Manchester is slightly behind the national trend at 50% of pupil numbers and 40% of schools. Of One Education's income from schools, 37% is from academies, so this remains a target growth area as the number of schools joining MATs continues to increase.

Corporate target 2028: 50% business with MATs

iii) Thrive (e.g., grow into a thriving organisation)

This business plan sees a diversity of our commissioning strategy including an increasing proportion of income from non-school organisations – foster/adoption orgs, social care/NHS, youth justice and intervention settings. This is in response to the increasing outreach taking place across services but particularly in intervention from the CPE, EP, and SaLT/SEND services. It is acknowledged across all services that One Education has to develop its customer base beyond the school environment whilst maintaining the integrity of working with children, young people and families as a priority. Additionally, the move to other LA areas continues to be vital to the organisation thriving and also changing the offers as more boroughs appear to be falling short in the services they offer to their maintained schools. One Education needs to be able to offer, and just as importantly be known for, end-to-end school expertise – from the classroom to LA and MAT strategic levels.

At present, excluding the music service grant funding from the arts council and MCC income only 5% of other income is from non-educational settings such as Local authorities, adoption agencies and NHS trusts. This therefore is a high valued source of opportunities for One Education across all services. (These figures exclude IT income from private sub-contractors.)

Throughout the organisation members of the Executive, Heads of Service and Team Leaders are engaging across the education sector promoting the business and establishing our offers in line with what schools need. The Executive team and Heads of Service are in communication with Dioceses, Academies of all sizes, schools, network groups in person and online, local authorities and collaborating wherever we can with tertiary groups in education, health, social care and youth justice. This now needs to be prioritised at a strategic level to ensure large scale contracts are won and for the organisation to be responsive to opportunities in all markets mentioned.

Corporate target 2028: 10%+ from non-educational settings

Strategic planning

Some of the organisation's greatest challenges also represent some of our greatest opportunities - to change organisation shape and how we deliver to our customers. There are many issues that need to be proactively managed and constantly addressed for One Education as a service provider in the education sector to not only survive, but be able to reset, and also thrive, including;

- Changing demographics: Fluctuations in children numbers affect funding, especially where funding is per-child. Reduction in pupil numbers - already being seen particularly in primary phase – 3% reduction in last 3 years nationally, 6% regionally (40,000 drop in NW primary pupils – dfe school database)
- Unpredictable government funding: Shifts in national education budgets, delayed announcements, and changes to funding formulas create uncertainty.
- National Funding Formula (NFF): While meant to create fairness, it doesn't always reflect local needs or rising costs (e.g. SEND provision, energy prices).
- Short-term vs long-term funding: Schools often receive annual budgets, limiting their ability to plan strategically.
- Policy shifts: Frequent changes in education policy (e.g. curriculum reform, teacher pay scales, mental health provision) require schools to constantly adapt budgets and staffing models.
- Growth of Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs): MATs have complex financial structures and centralised service. The total of MATs in last 3 years has increased by 17%. The number of schools in a MAT or SAT (Single Academy Trusts) has increased by 6%. (It is to be noted that SATs are declining as schools join MATs - 91% of academies now in a MAT) The One Education's challenge, which is also a great opportunity, is that some services still have low take up by MATs for example HR/Finance/IT which have over 75% of school/MAT revenue is from maintained schools.
- Economies of scale vs local needs: Balancing centralised cost savings with individual school needs is a continual challenge.
- Workforce cost pressures: Rising staff costs due to pay increases and pension contributions can severely impact budgets
- SEND funding pressures: Provision for students with special needs is often underfunded and increasing in demand.

Managing and delivering 11 different services into an increasingly diverse profile of customers, whilst maintaining the highest levels of quality, remaining attractive against our competitors is challenging. However, this allows One Education to reflect the unique breadth and diversity of the offers provided by the organisation. This will be achieved by focussing on our professional credibility and practically evolving the services to ensure they continue to offer bespoke and practical solutions for customers at financially competitive rates.

Corporate target 2028: Annual board reports including school satisfaction surveys and feedback.

7. Objectives and Priorities

In ongoing service development discussions with all Heads of Service the Executive Team and during Wider Leadership Away Days we have seen common objectives and generic priorities emerge that reflect the current education sector and the strategic issues One Education currently faces.

The Executive Team acknowledge that in addition to the synergies across service objectives and priorities there are very service specific drivers and opportunities as detailed in each service area's development plans, for example; the wish for the Educational Psychology service to develop their work with Health and Social Care sectors thereby shifting the balance of commissioning for that service. Also, for the Music Service to be seen as the appropriate home for music education in the region, reflecting the National Plan for Music, the Music Hub Framework, the Music/ACE Relationship Framework and the ACE Revenue Grant.

Service synergies: Changing Client Needs / MAT Interactions / Digital Transformation.

The education system in England is rapidly evolving, and MATs are at the heart of these changes. As the government continues to promote academisation and the role of MATs in improving education, One Education must stay ahead of key trends.

The education sector in England is currently dealing with significant financial pressures due to flat funding, which has been a key trend in recent years. MATs are harnessing the benefits of being part of a group to deliver greater financial sustainability however MATs are now also feeling financial pressures on a large scale.

One Education needs to provide relatable all-encompassing, cost-effective service solutions tailored specifically for the MAT market. Services need to refine and embed our current range of products and support to reflect the changing landscape.

As budgets tighten all educational establishments will have a greater focus on value for money, possibly moving to outcome-based contracts. Reviewing operating models to allow for cost effective provision of services with the ability to scale up remotely will continue to be part of each service area termly financial review.

In parallel, a focus of the sales and marketing teams will be on bids and tenders and reviewing relevant portals and frameworks, as educational establishments become larger the financial thresholds will more routinely be met for MATs on longer term SLAs costings. This area needs particular skills and techniques that will benefit the prospects of One Education.

'AI' has the power to transform education. Routine tasks may become partially automated, ultimately helping One Education's processes without removing the qualitative human factor we offer from our specialist professionals, but also enabling progressive and innovative solutions and guidance in this key area of development and change for school leaders and practitioners. (For note the DfE has recently published a policy paper, June 2025 on Generative artificial intelligence AI in education). One Education has already set up two strategic working groups with staff from across all areas of the organisation to focus and develop this area, one for the education sector and one for the internal business processes.

A shift in delivery of services from operational to strategic which also supports MAT centralisation. As MATs grow, One Education will increasingly work at the trust level, guiding central teams, evolving our 'independent' consultancy role by providing quality assurance to Trust Boards and leaders.

Measuring Success – Growth and Financial Sustainability

The overall aim is to expand the organisation ‘footprint’ to enable One Education to exist beyond just financial sustainability. Each service area aspires for growth but this naturally takes different forms;

Team Capability Growth: Broaden the team’s skill set, invest in training, develop specialists and cohesive succession planning

Client Base Growth: Increase the number of schools/MATs supported incrementally, extend services into adjacent areas and align provisions within educational establishments or other agencies working with children and young people.

Service Growth: Launch new offers, introduce subscription models for advice and CPD with a scalable system for long term growth and sustainability. Create hybrid delivery models that offer flexibility and opportunities to expand the organisation’s ‘footprint’.

Impact Growth: Track and demonstrate impact: cost savings identified, improved outcomes, customer referrals and feedback, using case studies to market current and new services & products.

Brand Growth: Having enhanced visibility and stronger brand presence for all service areas and within the education sector as a whole via keynote delivery, presence at sector and MAT events and continuing with professional publications and research.

For One Education to attain the aspirational growth the organisation requires for financial sustainability we need to be seen as a trusted thought partner in the education sector – not just a service provider. The organisation will achieve this by building upon alliances and raising our profile with MAT leaders, local authorities, and other agencies, ideally with multi-service engagements

One Education and Charitable intentions

There is a definite opportunity at the date of this business plan for the Company to adopt a charitable structure to further the aims of the Music Service and its considerable reach and impact across the City of Manchester. This status will run alongside the normal Company operations and it is hoped will in time expand charitable objects into intervention and other appropriate outcomes for children going forward.

Social Values and sustainability

One Education are committed to creating a sustainable inclusive society by actively managing our operations in ways that optimise our value to the communities in which we work.

Based in Manchester to support schools, their pupils and other organisations in the social setting, our employees work toward impacting social value in local communities and education establishments to influence the communities in which we work.

In recognising this we are committed to contributing to a more sustainable society and to continually improve the positive impacts we make. We recognise the contribution we can make to increasing social value through our own direct impact. Our impact can be categorised in terms of these key areas:

Social value and local community support

We will consciously make a commitment to our staff to provide time for them to contribute and impact on the communities in which they live and work. We will gather information and data in relation to the contribution already made by our employees. We will actively encourage them to continue with this by allowing 2 days per year for them to commit to community or charitable projects.

Our environmental impact

We have identified the key aspects where we have a negative impact on the environment, namely: travel to clients and paper usage. We will ensure that we have systems in place to manage and reduce these impacts.

Sustainability

In addition, we can make a positive difference by ensuring the methods and processes we use through procurement and internally address sustainability by reducing waste and encouraging recycling.

Charitable Support

To realise our Social Value objectives, we also recognise the need for support to local charities. This is achieved through our existing communication channels including team briefings, staff induction processes and stakeholder engagement. We actively contribute financially and in-kind to local City organisations and causes along with school events and initiatives.

Appendix 3a



Stuart Fern
Chief Executive Officer



Mark Seddon
Director of Business
Development and IT



Rachel Foster
Director of HR and Education
Strategy



Rob Merino
Executive Head of Service –
Governance and Compliance



Adam Cooke
Executive Head of Service –
Music



Dr Sarah McIntosh
Executive Head of Service –
Educational Psychologist

Appendix 3b



Petra Pratt
Head of School Finance



Vanessa Pomeroy
Head of School
Attendance &
Safeguarding



Jo Gray
Head of Educational
Development



Helen Marriott
Head of Inclusion



Katie Dillon
Head of HR



Jeni Goodfellow-Pemsel
Head of Creative
Psychotherapy in
Education



Dan Smith
Head of IT



Janine Nixon
Head of Marketing and
Engagement



Audrey North
Head of Payroll



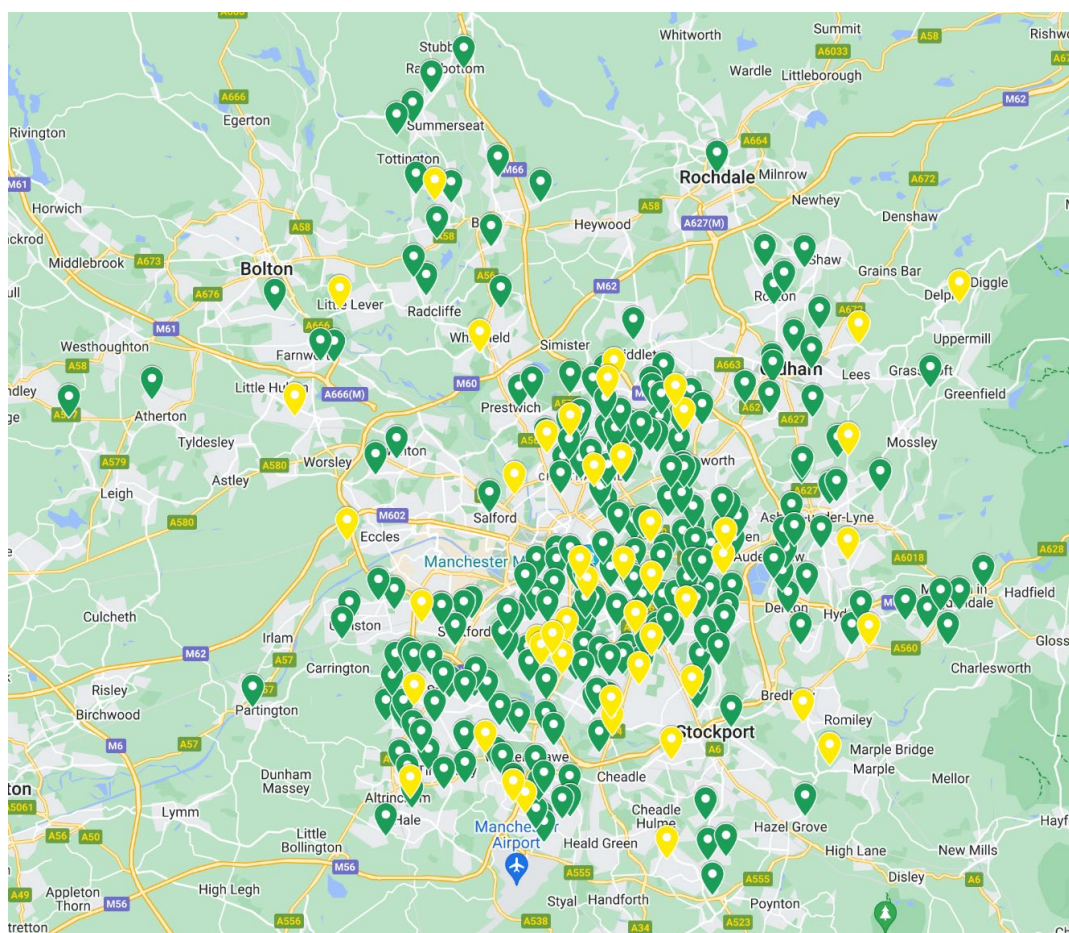
Matt Postlewaite
Head of Finance



Linda Mason
Head of Internal HR

Appendix 5a

North West Region overview:



Key:  - Primary School  - Secondary School

National overview:

