

Stratford

School Academy

Respect Excellence Responsibility

Vision 2025

Headteacher's Foreword

Establishing a future vision for Stratford School Academy (SSA) is an important process in terms of clarifying and defining what kind of school we want to be in the next five years. This will in turn play a critical role in guiding strategic decisions by governors and the Senior Leadership Team as well as serving as a reminder to all stakeholders both what is important to us and also our direction of travel.

SSA is a good school as evidenced by both external inspection and results and our own internal self-evaluation processes. We are oversubscribed and remain one of the more popular schools in Newham. Things we would identify as strengths of the school include:

- Our great students
- Well-qualified staff with a can-do attitude
- Good behaviour
- New buildings and good resources
- Clear and effective systems
- Systematic sharing of good practice

We believe this gives us a strong platform to go on and become a great school, one where students receive consistently high-quality teaching enabling them to achieve excellent results in an environment which is safe, stimulating, vibrant and inclusive. The vision outlined seeks to set out the key areas for us to focus on, namely:

1. SSA staff
2. The SSA student
3. The school environment
4. The culture and climate of the school
5. Leadership and governance
6. Community and external links

We have consulted with a range of stakeholders on these areas: students, staff, parents and governors. The following sections outline the vision we are aiming for, ie. what kind of school we want SSA to be by 2025.

Achieving this will be challenging, but we have a core value which says we should aim for excellence in all we do as well as one which says we should take individual and collective responsibility for achieving this. Moreover, our school ethos is underpinned by the notion of a 'growth mindset', ie. improvement is always possible if we accept feedback and work hard to improve.

All of this matters because it is about providing the very best educational experiences and outcomes for the children in our care. Few things matter more. Perhaps the thing which makes me most optimistic about us achieving these goals is knowing the great level of commitment in our staff body to make SSA the best we can be. Together we really can make a huge difference to the lives of many young people.

Craig Hewitt

Headteacher

November 2020

Vision for 2025

This is what we think the end-state of education should be at Stratford School Academy. It will define who we are and where we are going in tangible terms – ie. what we think the school will look like, feel like, etc. in 2025. Key elements of this are:

Core Values

These are the deeply held beliefs that will provide the foundation for our school and guide every decision within it. These will not change over time and will underpin and inform our approach to all significant issues within the school. They should be 'lived' not just words on a website or letterhead, so should influence the way we do things on a day-to-day basis. The chosen core values strongly reflect feedback from staff, students and parents, they are:

- Respect
- Excellence
- Responsibility

Core value	<i>What this means at SSA</i>
Respect	We show respect for ourselves and each other in everything we do; diversity is celebrated; we respect the environment, we respect learning
Excellence	We aim for excellence in everything we do – teachers teach excellent lessons, students produce excellent work; we maintain a growth mindset and challenge ourselves and others to constantly strive for excellence
Responsibility	We all take responsibility for our actions, owning both our successes and those times we fall short; as a community we recognise our responsibilities to each other and the wider community and environment

Mission Statement

This is a short description of the aims of the school - an 'at a glance' snapshot of what we are about as an organisation. At SSA our mission is:

"to serve our local community by providing every child with the knowledge, qualifications and wider experiences they need to develop to their potential and to participate in and make a positive contribution to society."

Motto

'Dare to be wise'

We have chosen this for 3 key reasons:

1. Although originating in the works of the Roman writer Horace, dare to be wise is usually associated with Emmanuel Kant and seen as the 'motto' of the Enlightenment, a key movement in the development of knowledge and learning and central to the development of modern society.
2. The owl is a long-established symbol of the school and represents wisdom in western culture.
3. The idea wisdom suggests not only being knowledgeable, but also using that knowledge in a sensible, judicious manner. Thus the motto embodies two of the most crucial elements of education, ie. the development of knowledge and understanding alongside the notion of using that knowledge positively and thus is consistent with our core values.

The SSA student

The typical student at SSA in 2025 will be highly motivated, fully engaged and committed to doing their best. They will have excellent attendance and punctuality to school and exhibit behaviours that are in accordance with the school's ethos of respect, excellence and responsibility. They will be proud of their school and will represent us positively at all times. They will be able to appreciate the principle of deferred gratification, and hence they will work hard at school, knowing that the benefits of developing good learning habits and attitudes towards self-improvement which will serve them well beyond their school years.

The SSA student will be flexibility and adaptability to an ever changing environment will be strong, as will be their resilience, purpose and ambition to be the very best that they can be. They will be competitive and want to win, but equally recognise that winning with humanity and losing with grace, good sportsmanship and self-reflection are important to our school ethos. They will play a strong role in society, being keen to be good and responsible citizens; proactive and solution focused. They will show good leadership, being strong when required, but always being kind and caring when dealing with others.

In terms of key qualities, the SSA student will be:

- Ambitious
- Hard working
- Happy
- Confident
- Solution-focused
- Knowledgeable
- Independent
- Organized
- Motivated
- Honest
- Determined
- Competitive
- Creative
- Responsible
- Positive
- Kind

Our students will exhibit the behaviours and attitudes reflective of a growth mind-set where they are

- Strong believers in their ability to improve through application and hard work
- Able to treat setbacks and disappointments as learning opportunities
- Inspired by the success of others rather than being threatened by it
- Responsive to all useful feedback (positive or negative), not limited or discouraged by it

Our students will exhibit the SSA core values of respect, excellence and responsibility in everything that they do.

SSA staff

SSA in 2025 will be a school where staff will feel welcomed, valued, encouraged, supported and challenged. To work at SSA will be seen as an excellent professional development opportunity where your practice will be honed and your experiences broadened. To work at SSA, the typical staff member will be fully committed to the ethos and values of the school and aligned with our culture. At the heart of this will be a belief in the potential of all students to achieve the very best outcomes possible irrespective of their starting points and circumstances. They will be enthusiastic about working with children, and not shy to let the children know that we like them and that we are on their side. Staff will see barriers to success as challenges to be overcome by creative thinking and persistence, never inevitable reasons for underachievement and failure. They will be ambitious for our students and maintain the highest expectations of them all and ready to work hard when it is necessary to give students whatever support it takes to achieve their best.

SSA staff in 2025 will be excellent practitioners in what they do, and will understand the critical importance of their role to the school irrespective of what that role is. They will be committed to their professional development and play a full role in any processes and practices designed to support staff to self-improve. As part of a number of smaller teams, as well as part of the wider whole staff team, staff will be excellent team players in terms of adhering consistency to all school expectations and practices. They will be open to being challenged where they don't meet expectations, as well as being prepared to challenge others likewise.

Staff will be proud to work at the school and will represent the school positively at all times both internally and when on external activities, meetings and visits. SSA will be equally proud of its staff. It will ensure that staff receive the very best support, facilities and resources to be able to excel in their roles. There will be a commitment to staff development, with a belief that all staff can continuously improve. The school's leadership and governance will be focussed on providing excellent support and opportunities for those staff members who are ambitious for more responsibility and leadership.

In terms of key qualities, SSA staff will be:

- Motivational
- Creative
- Professional
- Able to put students first
- Empathetic
- Accountable
- Willing to accept feedback and learn and develop
- Reliable
- Responsible
- Resilient
- On board, aligned with the school vision
- Empathetic to students needs
- Knowledgeable
- Determined

Staff will exhibit and model the behaviours and attitudes reflective of a growth mind-set.

Staff will embody the core values of the school – respect, responsibility, excellence – and strive to model these in all of their actions.

The curriculum

The curriculum at SSA in 2025 will first and foremost serve the needs of our students. It will find an appropriate balance between prioritising the specific requirements of our students and families within the local context and ensuring that our students are well prepared for the wider challenges of life and society beyond school. It will be an inclusive curriculum which ensures that every student in the school has an appropriate route through their education at SSA irrespective of their levels of attainment and individual and needs.

In Key Stage 3 (years 7-9) the curriculum will be broad and balanced, remaining true to our principles of giving students a variety of experiences that are theoretical, technical, practical, experiential and aesthetic and featuring all major subjects as deemed relevant by the government of the day. This will also consider the need for subjects to build on what they have achieved at the end of Key Stage 2, but also very focussed on stretching all students, whatever their starting points. The curriculum will be aspirational. Built in will be the opportunity and expectation that all students can attain the best possible outcomes at the end of year 11, with the curriculum providing the platform for them to do so. It will be flexible enough to cope with students who arrive at different starting points and with varying circumstances (providing alternative pathways as necessary).

Curriculum content will not be static but an area of debate and development in subject areas. Guiding principles will be students learning 'the best that has been thought and said' (Arnold) and gaining a thorough grounding in the key knowledge from each given subject area by the end of either Key Stage 3 or 4.

At Key Stage 4 students will have a variety of subjects to choose from, however, the core and compulsory curriculum will ensure that all students have the key knowledge and skills learnt in high-status subjects necessary for future progression in education and beyond. The curriculum will stretch students and prepare them for their chosen pathway of study at Post 16. It will also safeguard the school in terms of ensuring that accountability measures of the day are considered carefully.

SSA in 2025 will have a curriculum that:

- Is broad and balanced
- Leads to excellent outcomes
- Is relevant to the needs of our students and appropriate to the context in which they are being prepared to succeed
- Develops character
- Develops the whole child – not just academic outcomes
- Encourages a love of learning
- Develops a growth mind-set
- Teaches knowledge explicitly
- Has clear progression pathways from Key Stage 3 right through to Post 16 for students of all levels of attainment

School environment, climate and culture

Whilst a school is always much more than just a set of buildings, the quality of the estate and our resources have a significant impact on the quality of the educational experience we can offer. We are fortunate to have two relatively new school buildings and very good resources, whilst space is more of a challenge. Key to the vision is having a clear sense of what we want the school to look like and how this will enhance the experience of our students.

In 2025 we want the physical environment at SSA to be:

- Celebrational
- Safe
- Welcoming
- Inspirational
- Green
- Overtly sustainable
- Informative
- Interesting
- Stimulating
- Well-resourced for learning

More importantly we want SSA to be a good place to learn and to work. This means having staff and students who are positively aligned with our culture ('the way we do things around here') and the climate ('how it feels here'), is positive.

Key elements of the culture and climate at SSA in 2025 will be:

- High expectations for all students
- Respect for each other
- Celebrating diversity
- Celebrating achievement
- Inclusivity in all aspects of school life
- An approachable staff
- A common purpose
- Positivity – a 'can-do' attitude
- A focus on excellence

Leadership and governance

SSA will be a school which knows what it stands for. We will determine our own values and define our own purpose, both within the local context as well as in response to any evolving national changes. We remain fully committed to an inclusive community school ethos that engages with and serves the needs of the local community. We will be flexible both in terms of the preparedness and capacity to respond to any changes in the local demographic and circumstances to ensure that we continues to prioritise and meet the needs of the students we serve. We aim to maintain our position as a popular school, viewed positively by the local community; evoking a sense of pride and commitment both within and around the school by all stakeholders. We are committed to reaching out to other schools in both the primary and secondary sector to make both formal and informal arrangements that are designed to best support the development and progress of all children.

Assuming current legislation remains unchanged, SSA will have a governance structure that is capable and prepared to take full responsibility for the ownership of its' curriculum, the ownership of its' physical resources, and the employment of its' staff to maximise the autonomy, flexibility and responsiveness of the school to deliver the vision outlined above.

Leadership and governance at SSA will be characterised by

- Openess
- Clarity of purpose
- Expert knowledge
- Prioritising the wellbeing of staff and students
- Knowledge of the staff
- Motivation and inspiration
- Clear communication with all stakeholders
- Transparency

Community and external links

SSA is a school which is rooted in and serves the local community as well as recognizing that we are now all increasingly citizens of a connected global community. We recognize that engaging with others beyond the school can enhance experiences for both students and staff and therefore seek to create the opportunities to enable this to happen. We see ourselves as outward-facing, role-models and leaders in our local communities but also maintain the growth mindset which acknowledges we may have things to learn from other organisations.

At SSA we will seek to foster links which are:

- Representative
- Safe
- Inclusive
- Professional
- Open
- Visible
- Rooted in the local community but also further afield where appropriate
- Resourceful
- Enriching of students' school experience
- Developmental for students and staff

In conclusion

In this document we have aimed to clarify and specify the elements which will make SSA a great school by any measure. Put simply this will mean that students are safe and cared for, enjoy a great educational experiences in and beyond the classroom and this leads to excellent outcomes which will ensure they progress and thrive. To do this we need to have the right systems, structures and processes in place but most crucially really good staff all pulling in the same direction. Whilst we believe there are already many strengths to the school we are not complacent. We remain highly ambitious, expecting excellence of ourselves and our students and taking responsibility for our part in achieving this. We know we are setting ourselves a big challenge but we also know how important this work is.

‘The ability to read, write and analyse; the confidence to stand up and demand justice and equality; the qualifications and connections to get your foot in the door and take your seat at the table – all of that starts with education’

Michelle Obama

"Some people dream of success, while other people get up every morning and make it happen."

Wayne Huizenga