



People Strategy

2026-2029





PEOPLE STRATEGY STATEMENT

The People Strategy 2026–2029 builds on the strong foundations established during the 2023–2026 period and reflects Thomas's continued commitment to being an employer of choice within the independent schools sector.

As education continues to evolve in response to economic pressures, changing workforce expectations, advances in technology and increasing pastoral demands, our people remain central to the success of the Group. This strategy is designed to strengthen a culture that reflects Thomas's values, supports excellence in education and creates an environment in which all colleagues can thrive personally and professionally.

The strategy recognises that attracting, developing and retaining exceptional people is critical to delivering the Group's vision and sustaining high standards across all schools and future growth initiatives, including the continued development of Thomas's College.

The People Strategy is fully aligned with the Group's strategic priorities and will continue to shape workforce planning, leadership development, organisational culture and employee experience across the Group.

Over the next three years, the focus will be on developing an agile, inclusive and high-performing workforce, supported by modern people practices, strong leadership, data-informed decision making and a continued commitment to wellbeing, equity and professional growth.

STRATEGIC PEOPLE PRIORITIES

The People Strategy continues to focus on the key areas of People Practice across the employee lifecycle. The strategic pillars have been refreshed to reflect the changing needs of the workforce and the wider education sector.

1. Talent Attraction & Workforce Planning

Strategic Aim

To attract exceptional and diverse talent through innovative, values-led recruitment and effective workforce planning that supports long-term organisational sustainability.

Priorities

- Strengthen Thomas's employer brand across the education sector and beyond.
- Develop modern and inclusive recruitment practices that broaden candidate reach and improve candidate experience.
- Embed strategic workforce planning to identify future capability needs, succession risks and leadership pipelines.
- Use workforce data and market intelligence to inform recruitment and resourcing decisions.
- Ensure staffing structures support the Group's long-term financial sustainability while maintaining educational excellence and employee engagement.



2. Reward, Recognition & Retention

Strategic Aim

To create a rewarding employment experience that recognises contribution, supports retention and enables colleagues to feel valued, fairly rewarded and motivated to build long-term careers within the Group.

Priorities

- Maintain competitive and transparent pay and benefits frameworks.
- Review and enhance total reward offerings, including wellbeing and lifestyle benefits.
- Strengthen approaches to recognition and appreciation across all staff groups.
- Improve retention through career development opportunities, effective leadership and positive workplace culture.
- Use employee feedback and benchmarking data to inform reward and retention strategies.

3. Culture, Engagement & Communication

Strategic Aim

To foster a collaborative, inclusive and values-driven culture where employees feel engaged, informed and connected to the Group's vision and purpose.

Priorities

- Strengthen a culture of trust, inclusion and accountability.
- Promote effective communication between staff, leadership teams and the Board.
- Increase opportunities for employee voice, consultation and feedback.
- Encourage collaboration and knowledge sharing across schools and departments.
- Celebrate achievements and reinforce behaviours aligned with Thomas's values.

4. Learning, Leadership & Career Development

Strategic Aim

To develop a culture of continuous learning that equips employees with the skills, knowledge and leadership capabilities required for current and future success.

Priorities

- Expand professional development opportunities for teaching and professional services staff.
- Develop clear career pathways and succession planning frameworks.
- Strengthen leadership and management capability at all levels.
- Embed coaching, mentoring and regular developmental feedback.
- Use technology and blended learning approaches to improve access to learning.
- Align appraisal and performance development processes with organisational priorities and values.



5. Wellbeing, Belonging & Safeguarding

Strategic Aim

To provide a safe, healthy and supportive working environment where colleagues feel valued, respected and able to achieve sustainable wellbeing.

Priorities

- Promote a proactive and preventative approach to employee wellbeing.
- Support positive work-life balance and sustainable workloads.
- Strengthen mental health awareness and support provision.
- Ensure managers are equipped to support wellbeing and manage change effectively.
- Continue to prioritise safeguarding, health and safety and psychological safety.
- Foster a sense of belonging across all schools and teams.

6. Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Social Responsibility

Strategic Aim

To create an equitable and inclusive workplace where diversity is valued, barriers are removed and everyone has equal opportunity to contribute and succeed.

Priorities

- Continue to improve the diversity of the workforce and leadership pipeline.
- Embed inclusive practices into recruitment, development and promotion processes.
- Strengthen understanding and accountability around EDI across the Group.
- Provide ongoing learning and awareness opportunities for staff and leaders.



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES 2026-2029

Objective 1

Develop a modern and data-informed approach to recruitment and workforce planning to include proactive talent pipelines, strategic succession planning and increased use of workforce analytics to inform decision making.

Objective 2

Undertake a strategic review and rebasing of staffing costs across the Group to ensure long-term financial sustainability while maintaining educational excellence and employee engagement. This will include reviewing workforce structures, deployment models, staffing efficiencies and organisational design to ensure resources are aligned to pupil numbers, operational priorities and future growth plans.

Objective 3

Embed a culture of continuous professional learning through expanded CPD opportunities, leadership development, coaching and mentoring. Career pathways for teaching and professional services staff will be strengthened to support internal progression, talent mobility and succession planning.

Objective 4

Develop and maximise strategic partnerships with Affinitas Education to enhance communication and understanding of our shared ways of working and increase opportunities for professional learning, collaboration and knowledge-sharing. This will enable colleagues to broaden their educational perspectives, share best practice, develop international networks and contribute to Thomas's continued innovation and excellence.

Objective 5

Review and evolve reward, benefits and recognition frameworks to ensure they remain competitive, equitable and aligned with employee needs and external market conditions. This will include exploring flexible and non-financial benefits that support wellbeing, retention and employee engagement.

Objective 6

Enhance employee wellbeing through a holistic approach that supports mental, physical, emotional and financial wellbeing. This will include promoting sustainable working practices, strengthening manager capability and ensuring employees have access to meaningful wellbeing support and resources.



Objective 7

Continue to embed equity, diversity and inclusion across all areas of people practice by reviewing policies, processes and behaviours to ensure fairness, accessibility and belonging for all employees. Progress will be supported through education, accountability, data monitoring and employee engagement.

Objective 8

Improve organisational effectiveness through the continued development of people systems, digital capability and data reporting. This includes maximising the use of the HR management information system to improve operational efficiency, workforce insight and employee experience.

Objective 9

Develop organisational capability in the responsible and effective use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and emerging technologies to enhance operational efficiency, support teaching and professional practice, improve decision making and strengthen employee experience. This will include providing appropriate training and guidance, establishing clear governance and ethical principles, and ensuring AI is used in a way that aligns with Thomas's values, safeguarding responsibilities and educational standards.

DELIVERING THE PEOPLE STRATEGY

The successful delivery of the People Strategy will continue to be a shared responsibility between the HR department, Heads, senior leadership teams and managers across all schools and central functions.

A detailed implementation plan covering September 2026 to August 2029 will be developed to support delivery of the strategy. The implementation plan will include clear priorities, timelines, accountability measures and success indicators, which will be reviewed annually to ensure responsiveness to organisational priorities and external developments.

Progress against the strategy will increasingly be informed by workforce data, employee feedback and benchmarking activity within and beyond the independent schools sector.

The continued development of digital people systems and reporting capability will support evidence-based decision making, improve service delivery and enhance operational effectiveness.

Leadership capability will remain critical to successful implementation. Managers at all levels will be supported to lead teams effectively, manage change positively and create inclusive, high-performing environments.



SUCCESS MEASURES 2026-2029

Success of the People Strategy will be measured through a range of qualitative and quantitative indicators, including:

- Employee retention and turnover rates
- Recruitment and onboarding effectiveness
- Employee engagement and wellbeing survey results
- Diversity and inclusion metrics
- Participation in professional development programmes
- Internal promotion and succession outcomes
- Absence and wellbeing indicators
- Leadership capability and management effectiveness
- Employee feedback and listening activity
- Operational efficiency and HR systems performance

The Group is committed to reviewing progress regularly to ensure the People Strategy remains responsive, ambitious and aligned with the evolving needs of our people and schools.

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