

Ascend Learning Trust

# Local Governing Bodies (LGB) Terms of Reference



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## Version Control

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## Document Change History

Version	Date	Reason for Change	Owner

### 1. Introduction

1.1 Ascend Learning Trust (the “Trust”) is governed by a Board of Trustees (the “Trustees”) who are accountable to the Department for Education and have overall responsibility and ultimate decision-making authority for all the work of the Trust, including establishing and running of the schools operated by the Trust. The Scheme of Governance sets out the framework under which they govern and manage the trust.

1.2 In order to assist with the discharge of their responsibilities, the Trustees have established a Local Governing Body (LGB) in respect of each of the academies (although may, if desired, appoint one LGB in respect of two or more of the academies).

1.3 The LGB shall be a committee of the trustees pursuant to section seven of the scheme of governance.

1.4 These terms of reference outline the constitution of the LGB, in accordance with the scheme of governance and apply to all schools operated by the trust.

1.5 The trustees may review these terms of reference at any time but shall review them at least annually.

1.6 These terms of reference may only be amended by the Board of Trustees.

1.7 This document forms, guides and informs our ways of working for the Local Governing Boards of Ascend Learning Trust (ALT). This document is also part of the regulatory and legal framework which Ascend Learning Trust operates, consequently it should be read in conjunction with the Scheme of Delegation (SOD) and the Financial Scheme of Delegated Authority (Fin-SODA).

### 2. Composition and Membership of the LGB

2.1 Members of the LGB shall be known as “Governors.”

2.2 The trustees shall have the right to appoint such persons to the LGB as they shall determine from time to time.

2.3 The composition of the LGB shall be no more than ten members and shall comprise:

- the Head teacher of the Academy (ex-officio)
- at least two elected parents or guardians of a pupil at the Academy (Parent Governors);
- with the option of up to two employees of the Academy comprising one teacher member and one elected non-teaching staff member elected by employees of the Academy (Staff Governors)]; and
- any such other members (Community Governors).

2.4 From time to time, it may be necessary to temporarily extend the number of local governors (to provide situational expertise or to manage transitions between terms of office). Where this will result in the number of local governors exceeding the number set out in point 2.3, the Chair of Governors will discuss the specific situation with the Head of Governance and Compliance who will ensure permission is sought from the board of trustees on a case-by-case basis.

2.5 Additional members may be invited to present or attend the LGB meeting, including academy staff or members of the Trust executive or central teams. In such instances, these colleagues are observers and/or are presenting on specific agenda items. As such, they will attend for specific items only and have no voting rights.

### **3. Relationship between the Trust Board and the LGB**

3.1 The Trust is a charitable company limited by guarantee. It has entered into a Master Funding Agreement with the Department for Education and so the Trust is ultimately responsible to the Department for Education pursuant to the Funding Agreements.

3.2 The trustees are the charity trustees (within the terms of the Charities Act) and responsible for the general control and management of the administration of the Trust in accordance with the provisions set out in the Articles of Association and Scheme of Governance of the Trust.

3.3 The LGB shall be established by the Trustees pursuant to the Scheme of Governance (section seven).

3.4 As described below, the Trust shall appoint the Chair of the LGB.

3.5 The LGB shall in carrying out its role:

- a) Promote high standards and aim to ensure that pupils are attending successful schools which provide them with a good education and supports their well-being.
- b) Be responsible to the Board for its actions and follow the expectations of local governors as laid down in the Code of Conduct.
- c) Aim to establish that it is competent, accountable, independent and diverse promoting best practice in governance and
- d) Aim to ensure that local governors promote and uphold high standards of conduct, probity and ethics.

3.6 The Trustees shall support the work of the LGB by:

- a) Setting a clear strategic vision for the Trust to allow the LGB to achieve its own aims and objectives within such vision.
- b) Ensuring that systems are put in place to allow local governors to be presented with timely data to allow the LGB to analyse school performance in order to support and challenge the Head Teacher and Senior Leadership Team of the school.
- c) Ensuring that local governors have access to high quality training and development opportunities and
- d) Establishing a clear scheme of delegation and supporting the development of an appropriate business cycle and framework for local governance.

3.7 Any Trustee may attend any meeting of the LGB as an observer and without voting rights.

3.8 To support effective communication, Chairs of LGBs will be expected to meet and/or communicate with representatives from the Board of Trustees on an agreed basis to update on the work of the LGB and support with the wider work of the Trust.

## 4. Appointment of Local Governors

4.1 Recruitment of local governors is a delegated matter.

4.2 Parent and staff governors will be appointed by election. Where the number of applicants is such that an election is not required, the applicant will be recommended to the LGB by the Chair of Governors for approval.

4.3 Community local governors will be recommended to the LGB by the Chair of Governors for approval.

4.4 To ensure compliance with Safer Recruitment practices and Safeguarding legislation, parent and community local governors will be required to complete an application form and undertake a DBS check. Appointments will only be ratified subject to satisfactory references and all application processes being completed. This process will be supported by the Trust HR team.

## 5. Term of Office

5.1 The term of office for any local governor shall be 4 years, with the exception of the Head Teacher.

5.2 Subject to remaining eligible any person may be re-appointed or re-elected to the LGB.

## 6. Ceasing to be a Governor

6.1 A Governor's term of office will be terminated if:

- a) any event or circumstance occurs which would disqualify them from the office of Trustee under the Articles were he or she to hold such office;
- b) they have, without the consent of the LGB, failed to attend two consecutive LGB meetings, beginning with the date of the first such meeting he or she failed to attend, and the Chair and the Vice Chair (if in post) agree that the term of office should be terminated. In such an eventuality, the absence of the governor will be raised with the LGB at the next scheduled meeting where the LGB will vote on the Chair and Vice-Chairs proposal to terminate the governor's term of office;
- c) they resign from office by notice to the Academy Trust;
- d) they are removed by the person or persons who appointed him. This does not apply in respect of a person who is serving as a Parent Governor;
- e) they are a Staff Governor who has ceased to be employed by the Academy Trust; or
- f) they are removed by the Trustees in circumstances where they consider (acting reasonably) that it is in the best interests of the Academy Trust to remove the Local Governor.

## 7. Appointment of the Chair and Vice-Chair

7.1 The Chair is recommended to the Trustees by the LGB and appointed by the Trustees.

7.2 The term of office of the Chair is four years, but the Chair is eligible for reappointment at the end of that term. The Chair can serve a maximum of two successive terms of office. When a Chair is appointed mid term of office, their appointment to the role will reset their term of office to four years.

7.3 The Trustees are entitled to remove the Chair from office at any time, although this would be without prejudice to the individual's position as a Governor.

7.4 The Chair will ordinarily meet with the Headteacher of the Academy and the Clerk to the LGB before the start of the academic year to plan the work of the LGB for the year, within the agreed Local governance business cycle.

7.5 The responsibilities of the Chair include the following:

- a) to chair meetings of the LGB
- b) to set the agenda for termly meetings with the Head and, where relevant, the Vice-Chair (optional attendee)
- c) to ensure all LGB meeting reports and minutes are available to the Trustees via Governor Hub following each LGB meeting
- d) to give an oral summary of the LGB's deliberations if requested at meetings of the Board of Trustees
- e) to provide a direct link between the LGB and the Trustees via a regular Chair of Local Governors forum

7.6 In the event of a need to make genuinely urgent decisions between meetings on matters falling within the remit of the LGB, the Chair of Trustees, in consultation with the Chair of the LGB (or the Vice-Chair of the LGB in his or her absence), shall take appropriate action on behalf of the LGB. The decisions taken and the reasons for urgency shall be explained fully at the next meeting of the Board of Trustees and of the LGB.

7.7 The Vice-Chair is appointed by the LGB.

7.8 The term of office of the Vice-Chair is one academic year, but the Vice-Chair is eligible for reappointment at the end of that term by the LGB. The appointment of the Vice-Chair will ideally take place at the first business meeting of the academic year and will be determined by majority vote. Where a Vice-Chair is appointed mid-year, their term of office will conclude at the end of the academic year.

7.9 The Trustees are entitled to remove the Vice-Chair from office at any time, although this would be without prejudice to the individual's position as a Governor.

7.10 The responsibilities of the Vice-Chair include the following:

- a) to deputise for the Chair in his or her absence;
  - b) to set the agenda for meetings of the LGB with the Chair, if requested;
- and

7.11 Where the Chair is absent from any meeting or there is at the time a vacancy in the office of the Chair, the Vice-Chair shall act as the Chair for the purposes of the meeting. Where the Vice-Chair is also absent from the meeting, or there is at the time a vacancy in the office of Vice-Chair, the Governors of the LGB shall elect one of their number to act as chair for the purposes of that meeting.

## 8. Meetings

8.1 The LGB shall meet once each term; therefore, there will be six business meetings across the academic year. The LGB is empowered to call such other meetings as it feels necessary.

8.2 Meetings of the LGB shall be convened by the Clerk to the LGB who shall send the local governors written notice of the meeting and a copy of the agenda along with any reports or other papers to be considered at least seven clear days in advance of each meeting. These items will be posted, however, where the Chair determines there are matters demanding urgent consideration, it shall be sufficient if the written notice of the meeting states that fact and the notice, copy of the agenda and other papers are given within such shorter period as the Chair directs.

8.3 Any two Governors may call an extraordinary meeting of the LGB by giving written notice to the Clerk, which includes a summary of the business they wish to carry out, where it would not be appropriate to wait until the next scheduled meeting date. It shall be the duty of the Clerk to convene a meeting as soon as reasonably practicable.

8.4 The Local Governors may invite persons who are not Local Governors (such as a member of a committee, any employee, any pupil, any professional adviser and any experts of any kind) to attend the whole or part of any meeting for purposes connected with the meeting.

8.5 The convening of a meeting and the proceedings conducted at meetings shall not be invalidated by reason of any individual not having received written notice of the meeting or a copy of the agenda.

8.6 Any local governor who is unable to attend a meeting should ensure that apologies are submitted in advance of the meeting via the Clerk. Apologies will be tabled at the meeting by the Clerk and will either be accepted or rejected by the assembled local governors. Where apologies are accepted and recorded as such, the local governor will be considered as having attended the meeting. Where apologies are not accepted and/or not submitted in advance of the meeting, the local governor will be recorded as being absent from the meeting in terms of item 6.1b.

## 9. Quorum

9.1 The quorum for meetings of the LGB is a minimum of three governors, not including the Head Teacher who sits as an ex-officio member. A meeting may go ahead if inquorate, but any decisions required would have to wait until a quorum is established.

9.2 A meeting shall be terminated if the number of Local Governors present ceases to constitute a quorum. Where a meeting is not held or is terminated before all the matters specified as items of business on the agenda for the meeting have been disposed of, a further meeting shall be convened by the Clerk as soon as is reasonably practicable, but in any event within the same term in which the meeting was originally to be held or was so terminated.

9.3 Any Local Governor shall be able to participate in, and be counted as present at for the purposes of the quorum, meetings by telephone or video conference provided that:

- a) they have given notice of their intention to do so detailing the telephone number on which they can be reached and / or appropriate details of the video conference suite from which they shall be taking part at the time of the meeting at least 48 hours before the meeting; and
- b) the LGB has access to the appropriate equipment

and provided that, if after all reasonable efforts it does not prove possible for that Local Governor to participate by telephone or video conference, the meeting may still proceed with its business provided it is otherwise quorate.

## 10. Voting

10.1 Every matter to be decided upon at a meeting of the LGB shall be determined by a majority of the votes of Local Governors present and entitled to vote on the matter. Every local governor shall have one vote. Where there is an equal division of votes, the Chair has a casting vote. A local governor may not vote by proxy.

10.2 Any local governor who is also an employee of the trust shall withdraw from that part of any meeting of the LGB at which their remuneration, conditions of service, promotion, conduct, suspension, dismissal or retirement are to be considered.

10.3 The Local Governors may act notwithstanding any vacancies, but, if the number of Local Governors is less than the number fixed as the quorum, the continuing Local Governors may act only for the purpose of filling vacancies.

10.4 A resolution in writing, signed by all Local Governors entitled to receive notice of a meeting shall be valid and effective as if it had been passed at a meeting duly convened and held. Such a resolution may consist of several documents in the same form, each signed by one or more Local Governors and may include an electronic communication by or on behalf of the LGB indicating their agreement to the form of resolution providing that the Local Governor has previously notified the LGB in writing of the email address or addresses which the Local Governor will use.

## 11. Conflicts of interest

11.1 Governors shall complete a register of their business interests, which shall be reviewed annually. It is the responsibility of all local governors to notify the clerk of any changes that occur outside the annual review.

11.2 Any Local Governor who has any duty or personal interest that conflicts or may conflict with his or her duties as a Local Governor shall:

- a) disclose that fact to the LGB as soon as he or she becomes aware of it. A Local Governor must absent himself or herself from any discussions of the LGB in which it is possible that a conflict will arise between his or her duty to act solely in the interests of the Academy and Trust and such duty or personal interest;
- b) withdraw from any meeting for that item unless expressly invited to remain in order to provide information;
- c) not be counted in the quorum for that part of any meeting; and

d) withdraw during the vote and have no vote on the matter.

## 12. Committees of the Local Governing Body

12.1 With the prior agreement of the Trustees, the LGB may establish committees to carry out certain functions of its work. The LGB must determine the constitution, membership and terms of reference of any committee it decides to establish and review them annually.

12.2 The establishment of any committees other than temporary, ad hoc committees required to deal with specific issues, must be agreed in advance with the Trustees unless such committees are required urgently, in which event the Chair can authorise the establishment of the committee and report subsequently to the Trustees.

## 13. Minutes of Meetings

13.1 Attendance at each LGB meeting, issues discussed and recommendations for decisions shall be recorded, published on Governor Hub within 10 days of the meeting and electronically signed by the

Chair at the next meeting of the LGB.

## 14. Delegation to the LGB

14.1 The Board of Trustees has established the LGB with its main purpose being to hold the Head Teacher to account for the educational standards and performance of the school. This will be achieved through the LGB monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the Academy Development Plan, ensuring clear links from the self-evaluation process.

14.2 The Board of Trustees have set out delegated responsibilities within the Scheme of Delegation document. Any other role that the Trustees agree shall be carried out by the LGB following communication in writing to the Chair of the LGB.

14.3 Appendix 1 contains a list of reserved matters which are matters for consideration and determination by the Members and Board of Trustees and are not issues for determination by the Local Governors.

## 15. Strategy

15.1 The LGB is responsible for setting and ensuring the vision and strategic direction of the school within the framework set by the Board of Trustees.

15.2 The LGB will support the headteacher and the executive leadership team to ensure meaningful engagement with local stakeholders.

## 16. Education

16.1 The LGB will have oversight for:

- a) Holding school leaders to account for the educational performance of each school
- b) Evaluating pupil progress against targets, including identified sub-groups, and any other pupil groups considered to be at risk of not meeting expected levels of achievement
- c) Evaluating analysis of examination results and key government benchmarking data, including Key Stage assessments, considering the implications in relation to targets set
- d) Monitoring key groups of students, particularly those identified as disadvantaged, in receipt of the service premium and/or who have SEND. The LGB will appoint a named SEND governor.
- e) Evaluate curriculum policy and subject options including evaluating reports from curriculum leaders
- f) Analysing stakeholder feedback on the quality of education via in person feedback and surveys
- g) Monitor and evaluate the reports on the quality of teaching provided by the Senior Leadership Team and consider necessary actions
- h) Oversight of the provision for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, ensuring that support and extension programmes are appropriately developed and targeted.
- i) Working with the school and trust leaders to develop the Academy Development Plan and Self -Evaluation Framework.
- j) Monitoring the number of suspensions and exclusions on a termly basis and if required, to convene a Governors Disciplinary Panel to review any permanent exclusion or other exclusions as directed by the DfE guidance.

k) The overall management of stage 3 complaints (Governor review) of the Trust complaints' policy.

l) Reviewing the academy specific behaviour for learning processes within the wider trust behaviour policy and its impact on standards.

## 17. Safeguarding

17.1 The LGB will have oversight for:

- a) Reviewing safeguarding arrangements in the school and receiving regular monitoring reports ensuring compliance and demonstrating good practice.
- b) Appointing one of the LGB Governors to be the Named Safeguarding Governor.
- c) Ensuring all Governors have access to and have read the Academy/Trust safeguarding policy and KCSIE Part 1.
- d) Ensuring all Governors have access to and attend safeguarding training
- e) Working with the Head of Estates to monitor the Health and Safety practice in school and receive updates on matters linked to H&S via monitoring reports and visits.

## 18. Governance and Compliance

18.1 The LGB will have oversight for:

- a) Conducting an annual self-evaluation of its performance and maintaining an accurate skills audit to support the board of trustees in identifying and providing appropriate training.
- b) Recommending a Chair to the board of trustees and appointing a Vice-Chair (if necessary) as per the terms of this document.
- c) Recommending 'Community Governors'.
- d) Working with the trustees, executive leadership and the headteacher to develop appropriate equality objectives for the Academy, which are routinely monitored in line with statutory guidance.
- e) Audit the academies website at least annually for statutory compliance, usability and accuracy.

## 19. Finance and Resources

19.1 The LGB will have oversight for:

- a) Ensuring school level resources are applied appropriately and with consideration with the School Development Plan.
- b) Consideration of the school's required funding needs and to support the board of trustees in relation to setting of an annual budget.
- c) Supporting the trustees with regular review of the income, expenditure and cash flow of the academy, alongside the annual academy budget
- d) Monitor specific pupil funding which is provided for identified groups, including Pupil Premium, Sports Premium, SEND High Needs Top Up, etc. Ensure that the funding is being used prudently to address identified barriers and is being rigorously evaluated and reported in line with statutory requirements
- e) Maintaining a register of business interests of LGB members.
- f) Observing the established levels of delegation and protocols.

## 20. Human Resources

20.1 The Board of Trustees will inform the LGB of any prospective significant changes to the staffing structure of the school.

20.2 The LGB is responsible for:

- a) Being involved in shortlisting candidates for the position of Head Teacher
- b) Providing a Governor to sit on interview panels and support the recruitment processes for the Head Teacher and/or members of the Senior Leadership Team, as required.
- c) Hearing appeals, where policies specify.
- d) Reviewing and monitoring the impact of the range of strategies/initiatives in place to support Staff Wellbeing and Workload in the school.

## 21. Policies

21.1 The LGB is responsible for reviewing and approving policies pursuant to the policy cycle of review and delegation.

## 22. Intervention Rights

22.1 The Board of Trustees remains ultimately responsible for the Academy Trust and the conduct of the Academies. The operation of the various elements of governance and the Scheme of Delegation are crucial to its success. However, there will be circumstances (more the exception than the norm) where the Board of Trustees might need to intervene and, for example, withdraw delegated authority for a particular element of governance including an LGB.

In such circumstances, the Board of Trustees, along with the CEO and the senior leadership team, would work closely with any Academy or Academies concerned and those involved in their governance who would be expected to promptly implement any advice or recommendations made by the Board of Trustees and the senior leadership team.

22.2 The Board of Trustees reserves the right to review or remove any power or responsibility which it has delegated, in particular, in circumstances where serious concerns in the running of an Academy or Academies are identified (either internally within the Academy Trust or by a third party), including where:

- a) there are concerns about financial matters;
- b) insufficient progress is being made against educational targets (including where intervention by the Secretary of State is being considered or carried out);
- c) there has been a breakdown in the way the Academy is managed or governed;
- d) the safety of pupils or staff is threatened, including a breakdown of discipline; or
- e) the Board of Trustees considers such removal of power or responsibility appropriate in all of the circumstances.

## Appendix 1    Reserved Matters

The Reserved Matters are:

### **Members**

(subject to such other consents / requirements as might be required by law or the Funding Agreement)

- 1      To change the name of the Academy Trust
- 2      To change the Objects (which would require Charity Commission and Secretary of State consent in any event)
- 3      To change the structure of the Board of Trustees
- 4      To amend the Articles of Association
- 5      To amend this Scheme
- 6      To pass a resolution to wind up an Academy or the Academy Trust
- 7      To appoint the auditors (save to the extent that the Trustees may make a casual appointment)

### **Trustees - (subject to such other consents / requirements as might be required by law or the Funding Agreement)**

- 8      To change the name of the Academies
- 9      To determine the educational character, mission or ethos of the Academies
- 10     To adopt or alter the constitution and terms of reference of any committee of the Board of Trustees
- 11     To terminate a supplemental funding agreement for an Academy
- 12     To establish a trading company
- 13     To sell, purchase, mortgage or charge any land in which the Academy Trust has an interest
- 14     To approve the annual estimates of income and expenditure (budgets) and major projects
- 15     To appoint investment advisors

- 16 To sign off the annual accounts
- 17 To appoint or dismiss the Chief Financial Officer, the Chief Executive Officer, the Heads, the Company Secretary or the Clerk to the Trustees
- 18 To settle the division of executive responsibilities between the Trustees on the one hand and Chief Executive Officer, the Headteacher and the Chief Financial Officer on the other hand, and to settle the division of executive responsibilities between those individuals
- 19 To do any other act which the Funding Agreement expressly reserves to the Board of Trustees or to another body (including for the avoidance of doubt, terminating the Funding Agreement or any part of it)
- 20 To do any other act which the Articles expressly reserve to the Board of Trustees or to another body
- 21 To do any other act which the Board of Trustees determine to be a Reserved Matter from time to time

## Appendix 2 Local Governing Body Role Descriptors

The following role descriptors set out scope and specific responsibilities of key post holders within the local governing body structure. They should be used as a guide to support the work of these post holders in addition to supporting recruitment exercises.

### Chair of Local Governing Body

The role of the Chair of the Local Governing Body is to provide leadership to the governing board, ensuring that it fulfils its functions well, and to work closely with the headteacher to support, advise and help shape proposals to be discussed at LGB meetings, ensuring the focus is strategic.

#### Leading Governance

- Ensure the LGB and headteacher have a shared vision and sense of purpose which fits within the broader strategic vision of the Multi-Academy Trust, as set out by the board of trustees.
- Work with the Head Teacher, CEO and Board of Trustees to ensure the LGB sets a clear vision and strategy for the school that fits with the wider strategy for the Multi-Academy Trust.
- Lead the LGB in monitoring the implementation of the strategy.
- Set the culture of the board, balancing and valuing the support and challenge responsibilities, the generative and fiduciary modes of operation.
- Ensure the board acts as a team.
- Where required, represent the governing board in its dealings with external partners and be an advocate for the school/trust.
- Attend school and trust functions (performances/sports days/prize-giving) as appropriate and encourage other governors/trustees to do so.

#### Leading and Developing the Team

- Ensure the LGB has the required skills and commitment to govern well, and that identified skills gaps are filled through working in partnership with the Head of Governance and Compliance.

- Ensure a diverse team that reflects the communities served with a mix of new and experienced members and a variety of backgrounds.
- Ensure all members of the LGB have a thorough understanding of their role and receive appropriate induction and training as required.
- Oversee the LGB, and individual board members, to conduct annual self-evaluation; regularly analyse the strengths and areas of development for the LGB and work with the Head of Governance and Compliance as well as trustees to evaluate the effectiveness of local governance.
- Ensure that members of the LGB are involved and feel valued/
- Encourage the development of board members/
- Model and reinforce the board's agreed code of conduct.
- Develop a good working relationship with the chair, ensuring they are kept fully informed and delegating tasks as appropriate.
- Develop a good working relationship with the Chair of Trustees and any trustee that is working closely with the LGB either in a link capacity or appointed by the board of trustees to oversee governance. Ensure that information is shared regularly to support the work of trustees in developing the strategic direction
- Ensure that there is a plan for succession for the chair and/or vice chair (if appropriate).

### **Working with the Head Teacher**

- Build a professional relationship with the Head Teacher that allows for honest conversations, acting as a sounding board and ensuring there are no surprises at meetings.
- meet regularly (normally monthly) with the Head Teacher to ensure regular support and challenge.
- Support the Multi-Academy Trust in the recruitment of the Head Teacher and members of the Senior Leadership Team, as appropriate.
- Ensure all governors concentrate on their strategic role and hold the headteacher to account.
- Ensure that school leaders provide information that allows the board to fulfil its function

- Ensure the workload and wellbeing of executive leaders is considered and liaise with members of the executive team, including the Head Teachers line manager, to raise concerns with wellbeing, if appropriate.
- Ensure the headteacher provides staff with an understanding of the role of the local governing board and acts as link between the two.

### **Leading Improvement**

- Ensure the LGB is involved at a strategic level in the school's self-evaluation process and that this feeds into its key priorities.
- Ensure the LGB's business is focused on the strategic priorities.
- Ensure the board has the information it needs to monitor the progress of pupils and consider appropriate actions to improve outcomes
- Ensure the board has good knowledge of the school

### **Leading Governing Board Business**

- Work with the Head of Governance and Compliance to ensure the local governing board appoints a governance professional (clerk) capable of advising the board on its functions and relevant procedure and that they are appraised and developed.
- Collaborate with the governance professional to establish effective working procedures.
- Work with the governance professional and the lead executive to plan for board meetings, ensuring that agendas focus on the board's key responsibilities and strategic priorities and avoid unnecessary paperwork in line with the agreed business cycle of local governing bodies.
- Chair meetings effectively, promoting an open culture that allows ideas and discussion to thrive while ensuring clear decisions are reached as quickly as possible.
- Ensure that decisions taken at the meetings of the governing board are implemented.
- Work with the governance professional to ensure that records, including meetings of minutes and statutory reporting, such as maintaining a pecuniary interest register, are completed accurately and in a timely manner.

- Work with school/trust leaders to deal with complaints made to the governing board under the adopted complaints procedure.

### **Person specification**

- Candidates for the role of chair should be able to demonstrate a good number of the following skills and attributes:
- Commitment to the school/trust and its mission
- Personal integrity
- Good understanding of the environment in which the school/trust is operating
- Good understanding of the role and legal responsibilities of the board and its members
- Strong relationship-building and communication skills
- Negotiation and diplomacy skills with the ability to have courageous conversations
- Ability to think strategically and objectively, take the long view and prioritise
- Capacity to process information quickly and understand relevant data, drawing valid conclusions with a considered approach to risk
- Ability to chair meetings well, encouraging debate and facilitating decision-making
- Ability to build and get the best out of a team while addressing any skills or experience gaps
- Ability and willingness to delegate and trust others

## Vice-Chair of Local Governing Body

The role of the Chair of the Local Governing Body may often undertake some or all of the role of the Chair of the Local Governing Body, depending on the agreed delegation of the role between the two post holders. In general terms, the role of the Vice-Chair is to:

- Act as a sounding board for the chair
- Share tasks with the chair when agreed, ensuring a manageable workload
- Be the chair's deputy in times of absence.

It is recommended that the Vice-Chair shadows the Chair to enable understanding of the role should they need to deputise and/or to support aspiring Vice-Chairs to undertake the role as part of succession planning.

## Local Governor within a Multi-Academy Trust

As is set out in this document and the Scheme of Governance, the trust board undertakes the main functions of governance. They provide strategic leadership, accountability and assurance. The trust board establishes a local tier of governance and defines its functions in the Terms of Reference and Scheme of Delegation.

In short, the role of a Governor is, through being a member of the local governing body, to help the trust board fulfil its purpose and strengthen governance across the Multi-Academy Trust.

### Responsibilities

Governors have the scope and nature of their work defined by the key documentation mentioned above. These set out of the functions that are delegated to the local governance tier and also explain where the local governing body has responsibility for delivery, where it might be consulted to support wider governance or leadership structures, and where it will simply be kept informed to enable understanding to facilitate part of its wider delegated functions.

The below list of responsibilities is not exhaustive, but gives an example of the types of areas that governors within a local governing body might be involved with.

Governors support with:

- Ensuring that the school has adopted safeguarding policies and procedures that reflect the safeguarding challenges and context of the school
- Monitoring the implementation of safeguarding policies and the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements whilst fostering a culture that prioritises the safety and wellbeing of all pupils and staff in the academy.
- Ensuring that the trust policy for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is implemented and adapted to the specific school context where necessary.
- Ensuring that pupils with SEND have the resources they need to success.
- Monitoring the progress and attainment of all pupils, including specifically those who belong to specific pupil groups such as SEND, PP, FSM, etc.
- Evaluating the performance of the academy in relation to its development plan and using a range of data, both external and internal, to monitor progress against agreed key performance indicators.
- Ensuring that the curriculum being provided to pupils is appropriate, and takes account of the school's context.
- Consulting and listening to the views of stakeholders such as parents, staff, pupils and the wider local community, using these insights to inform decision making whilst also helping stakeholders to understand the school and trust's values and vision for the future.
- Providing the trust board with valuable insight into the challenges and opportunities faced by the school's local community.

In order to undertake these responsibilities, Governors must establish strong relationships with the Head Teacher, members of the Senior Leadership Team and other key staff including members of the trust's executive team.

From time to time, it may be necessary to ask Governors to serve on panels in order to:

- Review decisions to suspend or exclude pupils
- Deal with formal complaints in line with the trust's complaints policy
- Support with HR matters, if required by local policies.

## **Contribution to the LGB**

Local governors should ensure that they are making a positive and meaningful contribution to the work of the LGB by:

- Attending meetings, reading papers, and preparing questions for senior leaders in advance.
- Familiarising themselves with the academy policies and key documentation such as the development plan, self-evaluation and external documents such as the inspection dashboard summary report.
- Champion the Academy in the local community
- Visit the Academy both during school hours (with prior arrangement with the Head teacher) and for evening events to get to know the Academy and to be visible to the Academy community
- Attend training sessions for Local Governors, where possible.

## **Clerk to the Governing Body**

The Clerk to the Governing Body is a paid role. This individual is a governance professional whose role is to provide advice and guidance to the governing body on governance, constitutional and procedural matters. A professional clerk will contribute towards the efficient and effective functioning of the governing body by providing:

- Administrative and organisational support
- Guidance to ensure that the LGB works in compliance with the appropriate legal and regulatory framework and understands the potential consequences for non-compliance
- Advice on procedural matters relating to the operation of the LGB and its place within the wider governance structure of the MAT.

## **Organising Meetings, Hearing and Appeals**

The clerk prepares for and administers meetings, allowing the LGB to make effective use of their time and focus on strategic matters. The clerk supports the effective running of meetings by:

- Working with others to prepare agendas and liaising with those preparing papers to make sure they are available at least seven days before the scheduled meeting.

- Convening meetings and distributing papers as required by legislation.
- Ensuring meetings are quorate, inclusive and well structured.
- Overseeing the election of the Vice-Chair and liaising with the board of trustees over the appointment of the Chair.
- Recording attendance/apologies/absence and taking appropriate action in relation to absences.
- Taking minutes indicating who is responsible for any agreed actions with appropriate timescales; working with the Chair and Head Teacher to amend and approve draft minutes
- Circulating approved minutes to all governors/trustees/the Head Teacher within the agreed timescales and agreed distribution processes.
- Following up on action points with those responsible and informing the chair of progress.

### **Providing Advice and Guidance**

- Advising on legal duties and governing practice.
- Advising on constitutional requirements
- Advising on statutory guidance and policies
- Advising on annual tasks and decisions, using trust wide processes that are provided
- Accessing external advice, as appropriate, through vehicles such as the NGA, Local Authority.
- Liaising with the Head of Governance and Compliance to remain current and in line with wider trust governance systems and structures.

### **Administration and Record Keeping**

The clerk supports the LGB in maintaining records of policies and procedural documents and ensures these are accessible. This includes:

- Maintaining membership records including the contact details of members, terms of office and informing any relevant authorities of changes to membership details.

- Advising governors and appointing bodies in advance of the expiry of a term of office and the impact of this on the boards capacity, diversity and skills mix.
- Establishing, in discussion with the Chair and Head of Governance and Compliance, open and transparent recruitment exercises and where necessary, organising efficient procedures for election and appointment.
- Liaising with the trust HR team regarding governor appointment and ensuring that all relevant statutory checks have been undertaken.
- Advising the LGB on succession planning for all roles.
- Maintaining governing documents such as signed minutes.
- Collating, maintaining and ensuring correct publication of information about governors such as pecuniary interests.
- Maintaining a record of the LGB training undertaken.
- Maintaining records of LGB correspondence
- Maintaining GovernorHub
- Drafting correspondence on behalf of the LGB.