

Inspire Education Community Trust



Inspire Education Community Trust
Learning together and inspiring success

Welcome to Inspire Education Community Trust, a trust committed to ensuring excellent opportunities for our children.

We are passionate about children's education; we strongly believe that we can transform lives and improve the life chances of our children.

Our trust is established on the principles of learning together, challenging ourselves and working with everyone in the interests of all children.

Our schools serve their own communities, and each school retains its own unique identity. We are bound together by our mission to ensure a great education for our children.

Inspire Education Community Trust is committed to the growth of a family of schools, determined to ensure success for every child in our schools by learning together and inspiring success!

Success

We share our practice across the trust and with other schools to ensure success for all children.

Learning Together

Our schools offer a broad and balanced education through our engaging curriculum.

Inspiring

We are ambitious for our children and focus our energies on ensuring their success.

Inspire Education Community Trust

Governance Structure

Members



Board of Trustees

**Trust Finance, Audit and Risk Committee +
CEO Appraisal Committee**



Local Governing Bodies

The Trust

At a minimum, all academy trusts must have at least two layers of governance:

Members and trustees

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- The members, who take ultimate responsibility for the trust achieving its charitable objectives and holding the trustees to account for effective governance.
- The board of trustees, who deliver the core governance functions and ensure that trust business is conducted in compliance with company and charity law.

The Trust is overseen by the Board of Trustees (the TRUST Board) and is accountable to the Department for Education ('the DfE').

The TRUST serves different types of Academies, namely:

- Sponsored Academies (Require Improvement/Special Measures schools/academies)
- Supporting Academies (Good/outstanding schools/academies)

Members

Members have a similar role to shareholders of a limited company.

Academy trusts must have at least three members, although the DfE strongly encourages trusts to have at least five to provide a more diverse range of perspectives and ensures members can take decisions via special resolution without requiring unanimity. INSPIRE has 5 members. Decisions are made by a simple majority, provided a quorum of over 50% is achieved.

It should be noted that employees of the trust cannot be appointed as members.

Members can:

- Amend the articles of association.
- Appoint new members and remove existing members.
- Appoint and remove trustees in accordance with the articles of association
- Issue direction to trustees to take specific action by special resolution.
- Appoint external auditors and receive the audited annual reports and accounts.
- Change the company's name and ultimately close the company

Members should not be involved in the day-to-day business of an academy trust and their powers must remain distinct from those of academy trustees; however, they should be kept informed by trustees about the trust's operations so they can be assured that effective governance is being exercised.

The most effective governance models recognise that the members are responsible for holding the trustees to account. Some separation between those serving as trustees and those serving as members is, therefore, desirable for achieving robust accountability.

Members meet at least annually at the Annual General Meeting to receive the annual report and to make key decisions relating to the Trust.

Trustees

In the context of an academy trust, trustees are both charity trustees and company directors. In accordance with the DfE's model articles of association, the board of trustees must:

- Include at least two parent trustees, or have two parents on each of the local governing boards (LGBs) instead.
- Have no more than one third consisting of employees of the trust.
- Have no more than 19.9 percent consisting of people associated with the LA
- Academy trusts have flexibility to design the constitution of their board of trustees as they see fit, which could include delegation of governance functions to LGBs, or utilising advisory bodies for overseeing the day-to-day effectiveness of governance.

Trustees' central role involves focussing on the three core functions of governance:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction.
- Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the trust's schools and the performance management of staff.
- Overseeing and ensuring effective financial performance.

These core functions relate to the key features of effective governance, which are as follows:

- Strategic leadership – working with leaders to agree and monitor the trust vision, ethos and long-term strategy
- Accountability – driving educational standards and financial performance
- People – recruiting and maintaining a board of trustees with the necessary skills, experience, qualities and capacity
- Structures – agreeing a suitable structure to ensure effective governance, with clearly defined roles and responsibilities – all of which are regularly reviewed
- Compliance – ensuring the trust fulfils all of its statutory obligations and contractual requirements
- Evaluation – continually evaluating and monitoring governance to ensure maximum impact

Trustees also have a duty to:

- Safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- Take on the role of employer to staff within the trust and be responsible for their health, safety and wellbeing
- Oversee process related to the academy trust's assets and estates management
- Ensure that public money is well spent – maximising economies of scale, efficiency and effectiveness.

The academy trust board should consider their capacity and skills around the table when determining their governance arrangements, to ensure effective governance.

The board of trustees is the academy trust's key strategic decision maker. Although certain decisions may be delegated in accordance with the trust's scheme of delegation, the board is accountable for all decisions made regarding the operations of the trust and all schools within it. Decisions must be made based on all available evidence and by the views and needs of key stakeholders, including parents.

Trustees should not be involved in day-to-day, operational matters of individual schools – this should be the responsibility of executive leaders of those schools. Their job is to hold those leaders to account and ensure their compliance with their duties as well as effective management of their schools.

Committees

Audit and risk committee

The board of trustees must appoint an audit and risk committee. This may be combined with another committee, e.g. a finance committee; however, if the trust's annual income is over £50 million the trust board must have a separate audit and risk committee. In either case, the chair of trustees should not chair the audit and risk committee

This committee's role is to:

- Advise the board on financial and non-financial controls.
- Oversee risk management arrangements.
- Direct a programme of internal scrutiny.
- Consider the results and quality of external audits.

Finance committee

Trusts should also have a finance committee. This committee's role is to exercise appropriate scrutiny and oversight of the trust's finances. This includes:

- Questioning the draft budget prior to final approval by the board.
- Setting and monitoring the trust's outcomes.
- Ensuring that public funds spent represent value for money,
- Prioritising spending in such a way that boosts educational outcomes and is in the best interests of pupils
- Reviewing the trust's estate planning.

Local Governing Bodies (LGBs)

Whilst the board of trustees is the accountable body and acts as the key decision maker, it may delegate certain governance functions to LGBs. LGBs are essentially committees of the Trust that take responsibility for strategic oversight of a specific school or group of schools within the Trust.

LGBs are made up of people that the board appoints due to their skills and expertise. People who are members of the LGB are not academy trustees unless they also sit on the board of trustees itself.

Trustees decide which, if any, governance functions are delegated to LGBs.

While there is no clearly defined set of requirements for LGBs, to ensure that governance is robust within each tier, there must be a clear scheme of delegation. The scheme of delegation outlines responsibilities in line with the trust's articles of association and memorandum of association.

Individual academy trust roles

Accounting officer

A board of trustees must appoint a senior executive leader to be the accounting officer and this appointment must be made in writing. In single academy trusts, this will be the principal, and in MATs, this should be the chief executive or equivalent. This person should be employed by the trust, and ESFA approval is needed if they are not.

The accounting officer has specific financial duties, is personally accountable to Parliament and the ESFA, assuring Parliament and the public of high standards of probity in the management of public funds particularly in relation to regularity, propriety and value for money. The accounting officer must complete and sign a statement on [regularity, propriety and compliance each year](#) and submit this to the ESFA with the audited accounts, they must also demonstrate how the trust has secured value for money via the governance statement in the audited accounts.

The accounting officer must have oversight of the trust's financial transactions, ensuring the trust's property and assets are under the trustees' control, that financial systems are operated effectively by more than one person and that full and accurate accounting records are kept to support annual accounts. They must take personal responsibility (and not delegate responsibility) for assuring the board of trustees there is compliance with the funding agreement and ATH, and must advise the board in writing if its action is considered incompatible with the requirements of these documents or the articles of association.

Chair of trustees

The chair of trustees leads the board of trustees, ensuring effective governance and setting standards. The chair must ensure that trustees exercise their functions effectively and is responsible for ensuring that the board as a whole has the relevant skills and experience necessary for effective governance.

The chair should encourage the board to monitor the skills of trustees, most commonly via a skills audit to ensure that the composition of the board supports effective governance and secures the best possible outcomes for pupils within the trust.

The DfE's model articles of association state that a chair (and vice chair) of trustees should be elected each school year.

Governance professional

The trust must appoint a governance professional to support the board, also known as the clerk, whose role it is to provide guidance to the board of trustees to ensure compliance within relevant legal and regulatory frameworks and ensure that trustees understand the consequences of non-compliance. They also need to provide an independent procedural advice and administrative support.

The governance professional should support the chair and the board of trustees in organising meetings, circulating information, taking minutes, and ensuring that trustees operate within the articles of association, funding agreement and relevant legislation at all times. They should support strategic debate and decision making, and remind trustees of the core functions, in collaboration with the chair.

The individual appointed should always be someone with a sound understanding of academy trust governance.

Chief financial officer (CFO)

The board of trustees must also appoint a CFO or finance director, who takes responsibility for the detailed financial procedures of the trust. This is both a technical and a leadership role and must be an employee of the trust unless the trust has obtained prior ESFA approval.

The CFO must be appropriately qualified and /or experienced, they should have business or accountancy qualifications and hold membership of a relevant professional body. Trusts must also assess whether the CFO, and others holding key financial posts, should have these qualifications or memberships of relevant professional bodies, depending on the risk, scale and complexity of financial operations.

Autonomy across academy trusts

Academy trusts have a significant level of autonomy which makes it more important for the board to consider the regularity, propriety and value for money of all aspects of trust business.

Boards should establish and monitor policies, particularly related party transactions, executive salaries and expenses.

Academy Categories

When a school converts and joins the TRUST it will be allocated to the appropriate Academy category based on:

- its latest Ofsted Inspection Report; and
- the Trust's own assessment of its historical performance and future prospects.

The category allocation is very important because it dictates the following:

- the 'make-up' of the Local Governing Body;
- the extent to which responsibilities are delegated to the Academy; and
- the funding arrangements.

The category allocation will be linked to the performance of the Academy in relation to:

- the quality of teaching and learning;
- standards;
- governance;
- finance; and
- buildings.

The allocation will be reviewed at the first meeting of the academic year of the TRUST Board. Depending on the outcome of the review an Academy may either stay in its allotted category or be moved to another.

The TRUST Board reserves the right to change the category at any time if it believes this to be appropriate in the interests of both the academy concerned and more widely the TRUST.

Schemes of delegation and terms of reference for the local governing bodies will be amended accordingly to reflect the new allocation.

Appointments of members of the Local Governing Bodies

The 'make-up' of the Local Governing Body follows the category allocated to the Academy:

- Sponsored Academies (Require Improvement/Special Measures) - the TRUST Board appoints all the members, other than parent and staff members;
- Good/outstanding Academies - the Local Governing Body is appointed on an 'as is' basis to reflect the arrangements in place immediately prior to joining the TRUST; however, the Trust reserves the right to appoint all members

If an academy improves and is moved to a higher category then it has more say in the 'make-up' of the Local Governing Body. Conversely, if an academy's performance deteriorates then it may be moved to a lower category with a consequent adjustment to its Local Governing Body.

Delegated functions

The Schemes of Delegation covers five areas:

- Safeguarding;
- Human Resources;
- Education;
- Asset Management; and
- Strategy.

The TRUST has direct legal responsibility to the DfE. It is therefore expected to exercise a tight rein over Sponsored Academies in order to secure the required school improvement and this is reflected in the Scheme of Delegation.

Funding

A top-slice (from GAG funding) is levied on each of the academies in the TRUST to cover the cost of centrally provided services. These services may include the provision of a coherent package of school improvement which is tailored to the needs of each individual academy.

Working together

All academies within the TRUST, under the direction of the CEO, will be expected to contribute to one or more of the following:

- development of policy;
- sharing of best practice;
- provision of emergency cover/support and
- mentoring and coaching of staff

This re-enforces the principle of working together to deliver a first-class education.

Executive Team

The role of the executive team is to promote collaborative working across the trust through:

- Heads of school reporting back on progress on key areas for improvement
- Sharing of data analysis thus promoting mutual support and challenge
- Identifying strengths in individual schools to learn from expertise within
- Ensure agreed methodologies and practice are implemented across the trust

The roles of executive leaders may evolve as further schools join the Trust.

Publishing information about governance structures

The board of trustees must publish the governance arrangements on the trust website and provide details of the governance arrangements in the annual accounts. In addition, the following arrangements should be available in a readily accessible format:

- The structure and remit of the trust's members, board of trustees, committees and local governing bodies (the trust's scheme of delegation for governance functions), and the full names of the chair of each.
- The full names, date of appointment, date they stepped down (where applicable) and relevant business and pecuniary interests including governance roles in other educational institutions, for each of the trust's members and trustees serving during the previous 12 months. If the accounting officer is not a trustee their business and pecuniary interests must still be published.
- Trustee attendance records at board and committee meetings over the last academic year.
- The attendance records for each governor on a local governing body over the last academic year.