

# Tenax Schools Trust

## Governance Plan

### Summary vision

- Is a Church of England Trust
- with Christian values and principles at its heart
- which expects high academic achievement for all
- emphasising character development through and beyond the taught curriculum
- serving children of all ages
- centred in Kent and East Sussex
- has a mission to serve the wider community
- open to all schools which share our values and aspirations
- seeks to comprise a mix of free schools, converter and sponsored academies
- as a Teaching School trust, has a commitment to the professional development of all staff
- as a SCITT, has a commitment to the formation of new teachers and leaders both for the trust and the wider system
- aspires to continue a national reputation for excellence.

### Vision and purpose

Tenax Schools Trust is a Church of England multi-academy trust (MAT) that exists to provide outstanding education in both primary and secondary schools in Kent and East Sussex. Alongside Church of England Voluntary Aided (VA) and Voluntary Controlled (VC) schools, the Trust will also include schools with no denominational ethos. While our Church of England schools place particular emphasis on teaching children and young people about Christian values, beliefs and traditions all of our schools subscribe to our underpinning educational, ethical and personal development principles. We value diversity and will preserve the distinctive local character of each school. We welcome pupils and families from all backgrounds and from all faiths and none.

Our educational philosophy derives from our founding values:

- We believe in the value and potential of every child and young person.
- We are committed to high standards of education and achievement and embrace a positive mind set approach that insists all students can make exceptional progress.
- We will deliver high quality teaching with a focus on achieving mastery of subjects from phonics through to the skills needed to play a musical instrument well.
- We value our staff because exceptional learning requires exceptional teachers. We provide excellent professional and career development as well as competitive employment packages. We aim to be an employer of choice
- We will provide rich additional opportunities for all to build character and develop children and young people's moral, social and cultural awareness.

The name 'Tenax' is the Latin word for 'tenacious' or 'steadfast'. We chose it because we are steadfast in our belief in the value of Church of England education, and the consequent commitment to high achievement and personal growth for all young people.

Tenax Schools Trust aims to offer schools wide opportunities for mutual support and partnership, in particular through the practical sharing of leadership, educational and pedagogical expertise, resources and joint professional development.

The Trust supports its local governing bodies in their important role of working with the headteacher of each school

to ensure high standards are maintained. Local governing bodies have a central role to play in preserving the identity of each school and building and maintaining strong links to the community it serves.

The Trust provides high quality professional development for governors and open and frequent communication with the Trust board, which carries ultimate responsibility for the performance of the Trust as a whole. We aim to relieve governors of routine or administrative responsibilities so that they can focus on the important part of their work: improving the experience for children and young people in their school.

Tenax Schools Trust operates across Kent and East Sussex. It has a close working relationship with both the Diocese of Rochester and the Diocese of Chichester, both of whom support the work of the Trust. Likewise, it collaborates with the local authorities of Kent and East Sussex in providing excellent educational opportunities for local children and young people.

The way in which the Trust is funded is transparent and all schools understand the way in which they benefit directly from the contribution they make to central Trust services. The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) allocation is based on pupil numbers and paid to each individual school. The school make a contribution towards the Trust from that allocation. The enhanced buying power of a large trust is able to secure significantly better rates for many contracts and services than individual schools can procure.

## **A Members**

The Tenax Schools Trust is a charitable company (a company limited by guarantee and an exempt charity) which exists for the provision of education. It has five members:

- The Lord Bishop of Rochester (currently Rt Revd James Langstaff – member of the House of Lords, experienced school governor and member of several other Anglican academy trusts)
- The Archdeacon of Tonbridge (currently The Ven Julie Conalty) – Trustee of Church academy trust, MA in Applied Theology, previous work for the Youth Justice Board and Probation Service
- The Area Dean of Tunbridge Wells (currently Revd Douglas Wren) – experienced school governor
- The Chichester Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) (corporate member; chair of DBE is Rt Revd Martin Warner, Bishop of Chichester; DBE represented at local level by Ven Dr Edward Dowler, Archdeacon of Hastings, an experienced Chair of governors (secondary), author and Oxford English graduate
- Lady (Jacqueline) Evans – Chair of the Board of Trustees, experienced charity trustee and school governor, primary and secondary, and teaching experience in both primary and secondary

The Academies Financial Handbook (2020) summarises the role of members as follows:

“members have a similar role to the shareholders of a company limited by shares. The members are the subscribers to the trust’s memorandum of association ... and have the power to appoint trustees and remove these trustees ... While members can also be trustees, retaining some distinction between the two layers ensures that members, independent of trustees, provide oversight and challenge. This is especially important in multi-academy trusts in which trustees are responsible for a number of academies. Members **must not** be employees of the trust.”

In the Tenax Schools Trust the Members, acting corporately and by majority vote, appoint members of the Board of Trustees (and may remove any trustees appointed by them) and receive the Trust’s Annual Report, including its annual accounts.

In addition, in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006, Sections 489 and 490, the Members ensure the Trust has legally appointed auditors.

## **B Articles of Association**

This document is the ‘constitution’ of the Trust. It is a legal agreement between the Members. Lodged at Companies House, which can only be varied by special resolution of the Members (a 75% majority). The Articles are available on the Tenax Schools Trust website.

## **C The Board of Trustees – overview**

Trustees constitute together the Board of Trustees. In some documents trustees are referred to as ‘directors’ – the terms are interchangeable, but within this Trust we use the term ‘trustees’ or the ‘Board’ to refer to the Board of Trustees.

The names of all trustees, with terms of office, must be lodged both with Companies House and the ESFA. The term of office for a trustee is 4 years.

There is no upper limit on the number of trustees but most academy trusts operate with between 9 and 12 trustees in total, the range within which the Tenax Schools Trust aims to work. No more than one third of Board may be employed by the Trust (Articles and DfE guidance). In addition to those trustees appointed by the members, the trustees may themselves co-opt up to two further trustees. All terms of office are four years. All trustees currently, apart from the CEO, are non-executive, in other words do not form part of the senior management of the Trust and are not employed by it. However, legally there is no difference in the level of responsibilities of non-executive trustees and trustees who have executive (or senior management) roles and are employed by the Trust.

The Board of Trustees elects its own chair annually, who may serve as a member.

The Board is held legally accountable for all aspects of the Trust’s work, and in particular for ensuring that the terms of the Funding Agreements (FA) are fully met. They are also responsible for ensuring that the Trust complies with

- the Companies Act 2006 – the Trust’s obligations as a company limited by guarantee must be met;
- charity law – the Trust’s charitable objects must be observed and the obligations of the trustees as charity trustees must be met.

Specifically, the Board is accountable to the following bodies for the Trust’s educational and financial performance:

- The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)
- The Department for Education (DfE), in particular through the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC)
- Ofsted

## **D The Company Secretary**

As a company limited by guarantee, the Trust has a company secretary. This role is fulfilled by the Chief Finance Officer (CFO). The responsibilities of a company secretary are in summary

- Ensuring trustee and member appointments are made according to the Articles
- Terms of office of trustees are adhered to
- Meetings are constitutionally convened and recorded
- Filing requirements at Companies House and the ESFA are met
- Statutory registers (of members and trustees) are maintained
- Committees have legal and constitutional terms of reference
- The trustees have appropriate assistance to discharge their obligations

Some of these functions are discharged through the Clerk to the Trustees, but the Company Secretary has the formal responsibility for ensuring they happen, so line manages the Clerk to allow this accountability to be discharged.

## **E The Board of Trustees – composition and functioning**

The Board comprises currently

Lady (Jacqueline) Evans	Appointed	Chair (education, charity, expertise)
Mr David Ralph	Appointed	(Accounting, charity expertise)
Mr David Godfrey	Appointed	(Local and national government, strategy expertise)
Ms Gillian Hargreaves (Lloyd)	Appointed	(Education and communications expertise, appointed 28.11.19)
Ms Cherie Sargent	Appointed	(Primary education and leadership expertise)
Mr Ian Bauckham	Appointed	CEO and Accounting Officer
Mr Matt Bedford	Appointed	(Corporate, banking, finance expertise – via Academy Ambassadors)
Mr Simon Curtis	Appointed	(Property and charity expertise)
Mr James Shaw Hamilton	Appointed	(Education and charity expertise)
Mr Trevor Cristin	Appointed	(Education expertise)

In addition, the Chief Finance Officer (CFO) and Company Secretary, Mrs Catherine Dottridge, attends all trustee meetings in a non-voting, advisory capacity.

New trustees are recruited from time to time. This is done in a transparent way through the publication on the Tenax website of a role description and an indication of the areas of specialist skill, experience or expertise the Board wishes to strengthen in the light of an audit of skills and experience. Interested individuals are invited to contact the Trust with an overview of their experience, for example in the form of a cv. Where it is felt by the members and/or the Board that there is a good match a new trustee may be appointed (by the members) or co-opted (by the Board). Under the Articles, Board co-options require the consent of the Rochester DBE and consultation with the Chichester DBE.

The Board of Trustees discharges its responsibilities through meetings 6-8 times per year which include all trustees, including the CEO, and the CFO in attendance. It receives reports from:

- The CEO summarising the achievements and challenges of the Trust against the Trust's programme development plan, and any strategic decisions the Trust faces
- All local governing bodies, comprising a year group by year group analysis of standards and updates on progress to development plan targets
- Trustees' Finance Committee – with trust level financial reporting and a report available from the CFO
- Trustees' Education Committee – summarising end of key stage anticipated performance at each termly data drop and performance against Ofsted criteria in each category
- SCITT Governance Group
- HR Director summarising key activities as well as key HR measures of Trust
- CFO or delegate summarising risk compliance, governance, Health and Safety and Data Protection

## **F The Accounting Officer role**

The CEO is also the Accounting Officer for the Trust, and as such has a range of legal responsibilities in particular for

- financial transparency and probity in the use and management of public money
- achieving value for money
- ensuring feasibility of plans and decisions
- annual financial reporting

along with a range of other duties defined by the DfE, including that relating to the Prevent duty and safeguarding more widely.

The Accounting Officer has, in law, a direct personal responsibility to Parliament for the discharge of these responsibilities. The Accounting Officer's annual statement on regularity, propriety and compliance must be

included in the Trust's annual report. This is a formal declaration by the Trust's accounting officer that his personal responsibilities to Parliament for the resources under his control during the year have been met.

The Accounting Officer is held to account by other trustees at all trust board and committee meetings, where he is questioned about projected and actual outturns (financial as well as educational) and projections, and trustees assure themselves of the robustness of mitigation strategies against the trust risk register. This happens at Board meetings and at every committee meeting.

## **G Trustees' responsibilities and duties**

The Companies Act 2006 applies to the Board of Trustees and imposes a general duty on them to

- act within their powers
- promote the success of the company
- exercise independent judgement
- exercise reasonable care, skill and diligence
- avoid conflicts of interest
- not to accept benefits from third parties
- declare interest in proposed transactions or arrangements.

The Board's main responsibilities are:

- A. To set and communicate a strategic vision for the Trust and to plan strategically for its future, including for its sustainable growth, future shape, leadership, outcomes and financial health and take stakeholders views into account.
- B. To assess and manage principal risks to the trust – financial, educational, reputational and legal risk in particular – and to set an acceptable risk level in key areas and for key significant projects. This is done through the maintenance of a Trust risk register considered by trustees. There is a named trustee with responsibility for advising on risk who has extensive professional expertise in risk assessment and mitigation.
- C. To appoint and hold to account the CEO for the implementation of the Trust's overall performance, and for the discharge of the role of Accounting Officer, and to determine arrangements for the performance management of the CEO, including securing external professional advice. The CEO is held to account principally through outcomes set out in the trust development plan and progress towards them, and through the risk register and the satisfactory mitigation of principal risks.
- D. To ensure that the terms of the Funding Agreement are being fully met. This is done through an annual review of the obligations of the Funding Agreements as part of preparation for the annual report.
- E. To ensure that all strategic decisions are taken in the light of the Trust's charitable objects. The charitable objects are set out in the annual report and in the articles, and all trustees are familiarised with these when they join the board and regularly thereafter.
- F. To ensure the requirements of the Academies Financial Handbook (AFH) in force at the time are being fully met, in particular that the Trust Board takes overall responsibility for Trust funds and approves a delegation of financial powers that maintains robust internal controls. The CFO/Company Secretary leads on the AFH and ensures all trustees are familiar with its requirements
- G. To ensure that the Trust undertakes prudent financial planning and remains solvent at all times in order that it can continue to discharge its responsibilities. This is done through annual budget planning and prudent financial projections, along with stress testing against lower than anticipated income or higher than anticipated expenditure.
- H. To appoint, train and induct local governors, monitor the work of local governing bodies (LGBs) for each member academy and to delegate roles and responsibilities to those LGBs according to their capacity. This is done through advertising openly for local governors, and ensuring that there is a robust selection process in place for those who express interest, and that all newly appointed local governors access good quality bespoke professional development.

- I. To set a budget for the Trust, (to include the 'trust contribution' and the allocations of funding for each school in the trust with a range of indicative benchmarks for the school to use when setting the individual school's budget), to monitor the budget of the Trust as a whole on a monthly basis and to take action when necessary in the light of that monitoring. This is done on the recommendation of the CFO who prepares draft budgets for approval.
- J. To ensure, in line with the requirements of the AFH, that an appeals procedure is in place for headteachers to challenge the budget share allocated to the school on grounds of unfairness or unreasonableness.
- K. To set end of key stage pupil achievement targets for each school, overall and by significant pupil groups such as the disadvantaged, to monitor end of key stage achievement at least three times per year and to take action when necessary in the light of that monitoring. Targets are set on the recommendation of the CEO and are designed to move performance overall forward incrementally each year towards outstanding, or maintain an outstanding level of performance.
- L. To set targets for pupil attendance for each school in the Trust, to monitor attendance at each school three times per year and to take appropriate action in the light of that monitoring. These targets are to move towards or maintain a high level of attendance.
- M. To receive minutes of each local governing body meeting (to include all papers and reports appended to them) and address issues arising from them 'by exemption'; to consider the executive summary of key issues produced by each LGB (see below under LGBs); to challenge the CEO where these reveal underperformance.
- N. To ensure that each LGB is discharging the obligations placed Trustees on their behalf with respect to the distinctive character of worship and religious education in the school. This is determined by the school's religious, or non-religious, designation prior to conversion, is set out in the Funding Agreement and is therefore a duty of trustees. In the Tenax Schools Trust this duty is delegated at an operational level to LGBs
- O. To make sure appropriate arrangements are made for the external verification or moderation of information provided by the CEO, CFO, LGBs, headteachers or other staff on any main area of responsibility, for example through commissioning of an external advisor or consultant from time to time, or the scrutiny of audit reports or external benchmarking data
- P. To ensure that the health and safety and safeguarding obligations of the Trust are met via regular reviews and reports on safeguarding and health and safety in each school. There is a nominated Safeguarding trustee.
- Q. To ensure that all conflicts of interest are declared and documented. Because conflicts of interest are the subject of regular briefing and training, trustees may identify conflicts of interest for other trustees, and as such are obliged to draw these to the attention of the chair. Once declared, identified and documented, conflicts of interest are managed by ensuring that no trustee is party to a decision from which they may derive personal advantage or advantaged for any party connected with them. In most cases this will mean being absent from both discussion and decision making on that issue. In some rare cases, and at the request of the chair, a conflicted governor may be asked to provide information about the conflicted issue but will always be absent from the decision itself. That absence will be specifically noted in minutes.

Trustees may delegate 'powers' to other committees or individuals, but in so doing cannot delegate 'responsibilities'. In other words, for all external purposes the accountabilities remain with the Board of Trustees even when another committee has received delegated powers.

Trustees' responsibilities are discharged through a series of meetings, 6-8 times per year, at which reports and information are received and examined, proposals discussed, challenged and shaped and further work commissioned. This work is assisted by a written report on the progress of the Trust against its short and medium term objectives produced at least three times per year by the CEO for the Trust Board. From time to time the Trust Board may ask a senior employee with a particular remit (for example a headteacher) to join a meeting to support such discussions.

Trustees do not receive payment for their work, but travelling expenses are met in line with the relevant policy.

## H Trust and school policies

All statutory policies in the Trust are ultimately the responsibility of the Trust Board. To enable it to discharge this responsibility appropriately and in collaboration with the constituent schools, the Trust Board will either

1. set a full Trust wide policy,
2. set a 'policy principles' document (a framework within which headteachers develop a full and appropriately customised policy),
3. or delegate to headteachers or LGBs the power to develop their own policy.

Statutory policies and the levels of delegation for them are as follows:

<b>Statutory policy</b>	<b>Level at which set (see above)</b>
Safeguarding	2
Whistleblowing	1
Staff capability	1
Charging and remissions	1
Behaviour	2
Relationship and sex education	2
Special Educational Needs, including annual SEN Information Report	2 and 3
Teacher Appraisal	1
Pay	1
Data protection	1
Health and safety	1
Admissions	2
Accessibility plan	3
Single Central Record and vetting	1
Complaints	1
Freedom of Information	1
Premises management	1
Equalities and duty to publish report every four years; annual statement of equality objectives	2
Staff discipline, conduct and grievance	1
EYFS	3
Dealing with allegations of abuse against staff	1
Pupils with medical conditions	2
Worship, RE and religious ethos	3

## I Committees of the Trust Board

There are two main committees of the Trust Board:

The Trust Finance Audit and Risk committee – The Committee has the strategic oversight of all matters related to Audit, Risk, Finance & Capital Assets. The Committee seeks to: direct and monitor internal scrutiny and the delivering of objectives, provide independent assurance over the suitability and compliance of financial systems and operational controls, and ensure that the Trust is operating within the Funding Agreement and in line with the Academies Financial Handbook; to assist fulfilling the Board's responsibility and decision making, and the Committee enables more detailed consideration for ensuring sound management of finances and capital assets, including proper planning, monitoring and probity. (detailed remit in its Terms of Reference).

- The Trust Education committee – acts as a scrutiny committee to assist the Board in discharging its standards-related accountabilities. The role of this Committee is to test and monitor information on end of Key Stage pupil performance using the Standards Dashboard. Where necessary to prevent underperformance it challenges headteachers, via the CEO, to propose and implement interventions and improvements, or challenges LGBs to discharge their responsibilities on standards more effectively (detailed remit in its Terms of Reference)

In addition there is a Pay and HR committee and further committees for specific purposes.

Membership of each subcommittee for 2019-20 is as follows:

Finance & Audit and Risk Committee

David Ralph (Chair)

Matthew Bedford

David Godfrey

Jackie Evans (Chair of Trustees) only when audit matters are discussed

Catherine Dottridge (CFO) must not participate as committee member when audit and risk matters are discussed

Education Committee

Cherie Sargent (Chair)

Trevor Cristin

Simon Curtis

Jackie Evans

Ian Bauckham

The Director of Primary Education attends all meetings of the Education Committee in a non-voting advisory capacity.

Pay and HR Committee

Matt Bedford (Chair)

Lady (Jacqueline) Evans

David Ralph

Cherie Sargent

SCITT Governance Committee

David Godfrey (Chair)

David Ralph

James Shaw Hamilton

Richard Tyson (Director Teaching Schools)

SCITT Governance Committee

The Committee shall meet at least each term and its proceedings shall be recorded and reported to the Board at the earliest convenient time; and in any case at the next meeting of the Board.

Purpose

To ensure accountability for the SCITT against its strategic objectives

Key governance responsibilities

1. To agree and monitor the SCITT's annual development plan
2. To hold the SCITT to account for meeting its trainee recruitment targets, for example through ensuring effective publicity and marketing and effective candidate selection



3. To ensure, through the SCITT's leadership and quality assurance process, that the standard of mentoring, subject tutoring and training in each school is high as measured against the Teachers' Standards and Ofsted inspection framework for ITT. SCITT formal assessment points, feedback from trainees and evidence gathered throughout the year including from mentors, subject tutors and grades of trainees' work provide the evidence base for this.
4. To hold the SCITT to account for the retention and success rates of its trainees, focussing on the outcomes they achieve, employment rates and experience post training.
5. To ensure that the leadership of the SCITT across its participating schools is fully fit for purpose in ensuring high quality training and provides accurate assessment of trainees
6. To hold the SCITT to account for the recruitment and appraisal of its core employed staff
7. To ensure the SCITT is compliant with the Secretary of State's ITT criteria.

## **J Local governing bodies**

Each school in the Trust will have a local governing body which is accountable to the Board of Trustees. This will comprise in each case

- The headteacher (ex officio)
- One further elected staff local governor (term: 3 years)
- Two elected parent governors (term: 3 years)
- Five or more governors appointed by the Trust Board (who may include trustees or employees from other schools in the trust selected on the basis of their skills or professional experience), each for a term of 3 years
- In the case of Church of England schools which have a clear link to a parish or parishes, it is desirable for the local incumbent, priest in charge, or a representative of the parish nominated by the PCC, to be a member of the LGB. This ensures close links between school and parish are nurtured and safeguarded. The quality and impact of these links form part of the school's SIAMS inspection. A nomination of a suitable person should be made by the incumbent, priest in charge or PCC to the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees has responsibility for and discretion over any such appointment.

The chair of each LGB is appointed by the Trust Board. A Vice Chair may be appointed or elected.

In cases where a separate Memorandum of Understanding or Deed of Agreement between Tenax and a local Site Trust is in place for the appointment of a proportion of Local Governors for that school, then the Tenax Trust may appoint additional local governors to ensure a working majority is in place if necessary for the proper discharge of its accountabilities.

There are no committees of LGBs. The frequency and scheduling of meetings are to be determined at local level, within a framework established by the Trust, providing that a minimum of 3 take place annually for established schools, and at least 6 per year for new schools or schools with an Ofsted category of less than Good.

Local governing body meetings are supported by local clerks who are line managed by the clerk to the Trust Board, in collaboration with whom agendas locally are planned in line with areas of responsibility set out below (see Line Management of Clerks below).

## **K Areas of responsibility for LGBs**

Local Governing Bodies have a critical role to play in supporting the work of the School and the Trust. Their role falls into three main areas:

- a. **Quality of Education**
  - i. Approving a school improvement plan, produced at the start of each school year, which should have been prepared according to the Trust's guidance

- ii. Ensuring that the curriculum and its planning is fit for purpose, fully compliant with external and Trust requirements and enables pupils to flourish and maximise their potential
- iii. Examining progress for all pupils and identified pupil groups and in each year group (not just end of key stage), and challenging the headteacher where necessary (including the use of Pupil Premium and PE/Sport Premium income and their impact); acknowledging and celebrating significant improvement and strong performance.
- iv. Holding the school to account for the quality of teaching and its improvement; celebrating strong teaching or significantly improved teaching and its impact
- v. Ensuring that the quality of staff professional development is such that it enables the staff team as a whole better to meet the needs of the pupils in the school
- vi. Monitoring behaviour, exclusions and attendance, and ensuring that patterns are promptly identified by the school and appropriate interventions are put in place and monitored
- vii. Monitoring safeguarding in the school to hold the school to account for maintaining high standards of compliance and best practice; this will include ensuring all pre-employment checks are properly undertaken and recorded
- viii. Monitoring the achievement of pupils with SEND and who are disadvantaged to ensure that they achieve as well as other students

**b. Distinctive ethos, character and local traditions**

- i. Monitoring the character and quality of religious education to ensure that it meets the requirements, denominational or not, of the school's character as established in the Funding Agreement
- ii. Monitoring the character, content and quality of assemblies or collective worship to ensure that they meet the requirements, denominational or not, of the school's character as established in the Funding Agreement
- iii. Ensuring that the relationships education (primary) or relationships and sex education (secondary), teaching of British Values and Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural provision of the school meet appropriate requirements and are of a good standard;
- iv. Where there are established local relationships in place, for example with a local church, ensuring that these are appropriate to the school's character and are nurtured and maintained in the interests of the pupils the school serves
- v. Holding the school to account for the quality of the programme of personal development extra-curricular provision, and for levels of pupil participation in opportunities offered, including by disadvantaged students, monitoring that programme and challenging the headteacher where necessary to improve it further; responsibility for the approval of residential and overseas visits.

**c. Maintenance of good communication with and the confidence of parents and the wider local community**

- i. Holding the school to account for the quality of external communication about the school to parents and the wider public, including the school website
- ii. Monitoring communication with parents, both pupil-specific and general, and ensuring it is regular, clear, helpful and positive
- iii. Ensuring that opportunities to project or represent the school at local, regional or national level are taken
- iv. Ensuring that for the purposes of pupil recruitment the school publicises itself well and attracts good numbers of applicants – the aim should be for every school to be oversubscribed
- v. Ensuring that the representation of the school to its community reflects the Trust's guidance and policies

**d. Policies**

In addition to the three main areas of LGB responsibility, the LGB will:

- i. Ensure that the school has adopted the latest Level 1 Trust-wide policies
- ii. Ensure that Level 2 policies are completed and approved by the Headteacher
- iii. Ensure that any Level 3 policies are developed and approved

## **L Communication between LGBs and the Trust Board**

At least three times per year, the headteacher will produce a written report for the LGB covering the main areas of the LGB's responsibilities. This report will always be part of the communication between LGBs and the Trust Board. The report will cover: standards being achieved by each year group in key curriculum areas; attendance; exclusions; behaviour; quality of teaching; and staffing issues. In addition, the chair of each LGB, in collaboration with the clerk, will after each LGB meeting agree a short summary of ways in which the work of the school and the headteacher were challenged or supported (normally covered in the Standards Dashboard). This will include any issues of concern, key areas of significant progress, and listing briefly any interventions put in place. Where there is an issue of grave concern about the school's or the headteacher's performance, this may be communicated in a confidential annexe to this summary report.

The full minutes of each LGB will be available to trustees on a regular cycle, but issues in them will be addressed by exception only.

A forum for all LGB chairs also meets at least twice per year with the Chair of Trustees and CEO to raise matters of interest or concern.

## **N Line management of headteachers**

Headteachers of individual schools will be line managed professionally by the CEO or delegate, who will undertake the headteacher's annual performance review, as well as interim monitoring, and determine salary progression in the light of it. The CEO, or a person acting on his behalf, will ensure professional support and challenge on issues associated with standards and pupil performance.

Headteachers should see LGBs as important 'scrutiny and challenge' boards. LGBs' role is not to direct headteachers what specific course of action to follow on any particular issue, but to question challenge and as far as possible assure themselves that appropriate action is being taken to identify and address areas for improvement, and to flag a concern to the Trust Board if it is unsure. It is then for the CEO, acting on behalf of the Trust Board, to work with the headteacher to ensure the issue is appropriately resolved. If necessary and in extremis the CEO, as line manager, may use powers of direction to ensure a serious issue is acted upon.

Independent challenge to local headteachers will take place via the CEO, the LGB and, when required, via an externally sourced specialist sourced by the Trust for this purpose. The report of any such external review will be copied to the LGB and the Trust Board.

## **O Financial accountability and line management of business managers**

Annual budget share is allocated to each school by the Trust Board, on the recommendation of the Trust Finance & Audit Committee, along with the notification of the annual Trust charge and any specific benchmarks to be observed (such as use or accumulation of any carry forward, or a percentage of income to be used for staff or teacher costs).

It is then the responsibility of the headteacher in each school, working with the school's business manager, to agree a detailed budget for the year in question, using the Trust's budget planning format. That budget is then submitted to the Trust CFO for approval (in this the CFO is acting with delegated powers from the Trust Board). Once approved, the monthly reporting on income and spend is the responsibility of the school headteacher, with the support of the school's business manager, and is communicated to the Trust CFO at regular CFO-SBM meetings. If any variances are proposed to the budget, these must be agreed between the headteacher (via the SBM) and the CFO.

The CFO is accountable then to the Trust Board via the Trust Finance Committee for the overall financial outturns at the end of the year.

Where an individual school believes that its allocated budget share is unreasonable or unfair, and the disagreement cannot be resolved at local level within the Trust, the AFH provides a line of appeal from the headteacher of that school to the ESFA directly, which may, if it cannot be resolved by the ESFA, be referred to the Secretary of State for adjudication, which is then binding on the Trust.

#### **P Line management of clerks to LGBs**

Clerks to LGBs are line managed by the Trust Clerk (a professional clerk employed by the Trust) and are expected to work with her, and in consultation with local headteachers and chairs of LGBs, to prepare and clerk meetings. Regular communications opportunities are in place to ensure unity of message and purpose across the Trust.

Most meetings will be shaped by a template agenda which will act as a prompt for key areas of LGB, committee or Board responsibility. Sample template agendas are included at the appendices.

#### **Q Quality of education and outcomes accountability**

Accountability for educational standards achieved at each national reporting point (end of key stage) sits with the CEO. The CEO exercises this through the regular line management of each school headteacher across the school year, via the Trust Standards Committee, and through the monitoring of pupil performance at each (at least termly) assessment point. Standards monitoring is part of each CEO report to the Board.

#### **R Cycle of meetings**

A cycle of meetings is established to maximise the effectiveness of communication between each constituent tier of governance.

#### **S Annual review of governance and governor and trustee succession planning**

In order to ensure that governance is operating effectively in the trust, annually each trustee will complete a self-appraisal of their performance and contribution and will also complete a review of how well the Board as a whole is functioning, including its chairing. In addition, at least once every three years the Board should commission an external review of its governance, including a review of its own performance. Both of these will be reported to Members at the annual general meeting (AGM). In addition, the chair and vice chair will use the outcomes to inform training, development and to shape improvement in the Board's working.

The Board will be responsible not only for evaluating its own performance but also for evaluating the performance of the Local Governing Body. The chair of each LGB will meet annually with the chair of Trustees to review LGB performance – this discussion will be informed by self-appraisals and will result in areas for improvement in effective governance for that LGB.

#### Succession planning

- The Trust understands that it is essential that there is a diverse mix of experienced and newer governors and trustees covering a wide range of areas of expertise, and that normally governors and trustees should not serve more than two consecutive terms in office (unless for reasons such as covering rare skills shortage areas or other exceptional reasons).
- Annual reviews of governor expertise contributes to the strategy for the recruitment, retention, development and succession planning of governors and trustees.
- The Trust maintains a register of terms of office, skills and background, and other relevant information about each governor and trustee. This is used, in consultation with the chair and the members, to identify likely or actual vacancies or gaps.

- Role descriptions for governors and trustees are maintained by the Trust, and can be adapted to reflect particular skills gaps.
- Recruitment uses a mixed approach of personal contacts, advertising (across the Trust and externally), approaches to national and local organisations, including for example Academy Ambassadors and the Church of England, and more as appropriate.
- All potential trustees and governors are asked to provide a cv and interviewed before appointment by a panel of trustees.
- The trustees remain mindful of the importance of diversity and equality in trustee and governor appointments.
- Appointments are conditional on a satisfactory DBS check.
- All new governors and trustees are systematically inducted using an established programme, which includes familiarity with this Governance plan, updated annually, and are mentored by a named more experienced colleague in their first year.
- Training for all governors and trustees is made available by the Trust as set out in the Training Plan, to enable governors and Trustees to carry out their role effectively.