

TARKA LEARNING PARTNERSHIP

Governance of the Trust

The Board of Directors delegates responsibility for delivery of the vision and strategy to the CEO, who is also the Accounting Officer. The Board of Directors holds the CEO to account for the performance of the Trust, including the performance of the Academies within the Trust. The CEO, in turn, holds the Head Teachers of the Academies to account through line management.

The CEO is supported by a Trust Leadership Team, consisting of a Director of Finance and School Improvement Officer (when appointed).

Some responsibilities for the performance of each academy are delegated to the Local Governing Body. These responsibilities include setting the school budget for approval, monitoring whether the school is working within the agreed policies, whether standards and statutory responsibilities are being met and if the money is being well spent.

The CEO reports to the Board of Directors on the performance of the Trust including the performance of the Trust's schools, which is also supplemented by monitoring reports from the Local Governing Bodies.

The Key Elements of the Governance Structure are:

The Members of the Trust Board (5 Members)

The Members have ultimate control over the Academy Trust, with the ability to appoint some of the directors and the right to amend the Trust's Articles of Association. The members can control changes in the constitution (subject to DfE approval) and other fundamental decisions relating to the academy trust. Members also have the right to remove a Director by ordinary resolution (a vote passed by a simple majority of Members). The Members will hold the Board of Directors to account by receiving the minutes of Board of Director meetings, key finance and Trust performance monitoring documents, especially if decisions violate the constitution and agreed objectives of the Trust.

The role of a Member is likely to therefore be a largely strategic one with the responsibility to guard and support the vision. Perhaps the distinction between a Member and Director is best illustrated by an example; whilst the annual audited accounts will be presented to the Members it is the Board of Directors and the Chair of Directors who approve, sign them and send them to Companies House.

There is one member with approval from the Diocese of Exeter, who represents the voice of the Diocese and church education.

The Board of Directors (9 Directors)

The Directors are responsible for the same three core governance functions performed by the governing body in a maintained school:

- setting the direction,
- holding the CEO to account
- ensuring financial probity.

As charity Directors, they must also ensure that they are complying with charity law requirements. Academy trusts are charitable companies and the Directors are company directors and must comply with company law requirements. This may sound daunting, but, in reality, the duties are largely the same as those of a governor of a maintained school, such as regularly attending meetings, managing conflicts of interest, seeking advice from the academy's leadership team and ensuring the academy has appropriate procedures in place for reporting financial information.

The model articles state that the Chair of the Board of Directors will also be a member, thereby ensuring a link between the two layers. However, while Directors can also serve as members, the most effective governance models recognise that the members are responsible for holding the Directors to account. Some separation between those serving as Directors and those serving as members is, therefore, strongly recommended for achieving robust accountability.

There are two Directors on the Board with approval from the Diocese of Exeter and who represent the voice of the Church of England's education values.

Board of Director Committees

The Board of Directors meets at least termly and often half termly. The Board will cover an education agenda as well as a resources and policy brief. There will be an Audit & Remuneration Committee which reports to the Board of Directors. This will be made up of 3 Directors. The CEO (Accounting Officer) and or CFO will advise this committee (non-voting for the purposes of recommendations to the full Board of Directors and neither the CFO nor CEO will participate in discussions about setting their own salaries). There will be no other sub-committees of the Board of Directors, but working parties which must report directly to the full Board can be established with a clear purpose and function.

Local Governing Body Committee

The Local Governing Body is a Committee of the Board of Directors and has delegated decision making powers in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation. Sub Committees or a working party can be used where a Governing body deems it necessary to support workload, but these bodies have no decision making powers. The Local Governing Body is held to account for the performance of the school by the Board of Directors. The Local Governing body will have the opportunity to scrutinise Trust spending and will be consulted in setting the annual Trust finance contribution.

The structure is for each school to have a Local Governing Body Committee which meets at least every half term. Meeting minutes go to the relevant Board of Directors Committee for review.

Chairs of the Local Governing Bodies for 2018-19

Newport Community School Primary Academy: Victoria Nel

Sticklepath Community Primary Academy: Dave Mansell

Landkey Community Primary Academy: Seth Conway

Eden Park Primary Academy: Sue Lewry