



Learning Partners

academy trust



GOVERNANCE HANDBOOK
2024 - 2025

Trust Governance Manual

2024-25

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1 Welcome



Learning Partners is a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) with schools of all phases, in and around Guildford. Collaborative working is at the heart of everything we do. We believe that everyone deserves better and that everyone is capable of being better. We are confident in the knowledge that this can be achieved by a supportive community, built on working together and learning from shared expertise. This is how we will achieve our vision of leading schools where children thrive.

Our mission is simply to make schools better for children, by working together. We want to provide our young people with a safe, enjoyable and stimulating educational environment alongside a broad and balanced curriculum, which is inclusive and reaches all learners.

Our MAT is not about direction from the top, but an all-inclusive approach to school improvement, and understanding the communities in which we operate.

We are driven by values of ambition, collaboration, inspiration, innovation and integrity; collectively these are the cornerstones to motivating our young people and staff, to ensuring that outcomes are improved for all, and to preparing our young people well for their next steps in life as responsible citizens.

Being a trustee, governor or clerk is vital to providing for young people in our locality. It is our firm belief that strong local governance is central to effective trust operation. To this end you play a vital, voluntary role which we do not take for granted. We hope that this handbook conveys both the importance that we place on governance and our investment in improving our performance.

2 Our Vision

Our vision is simple, we want to lead schools where all children thrive.



Leading schools where children thrive

3 Our Mission

Our mission is to offer the best schools to our communities, delivering outstanding education to every child. We want to deliver the best education - academic, physical and emotional - for every child, whatever their individual needs, across all ages.



Working together to make schools better for children

4 Our Values

Our trust is built on our core values; having ambition for all, working better together, delivering learning that inspires, leading as brave innovators and always being guided by integrity.



5 Our Schools, Our Trust

The trust is the schools and the schools are the trust. We are now sixteen schools in the South of England, all within Surrey.

Internal Ref	School	Income	Pupils	Academy Type	Ofsted
Secondary					
GAB	George Abbot School	£11.7m	1,914	Converter	Good
FBR	Fullbrook School	£8.2m	1,370	Converter	Good
GCS	Guildford County School	£8.6m	1,192	Converter	Outstanding
GLB	Glebelands School	£5.3m	692	Converter	Good
KCG	Kings College Guildford	£3.9m	418	Sponsored	Good
SMS	<i>Surrey Maths School</i>	-	-	-	-
Primary					
BGR	Boxgrove Primary School	£3.5m	637	Converter	Good
GGR	Guildford Grove Primary School	£2.9m	416	Converter	Good
BUR	Burpham Primary School	£2.4m	429	Converter	Outstanding
LFI	Loseley Fields Primary School	£2.1m	338	Converter	Good
NME	Northmead Junior School	£2.0m	353	Converter	Good
TBN	Tillingbourne Junior School	£1.9m	360	Converter	Good
PBR	Pirbright Village Primary School	£2.0m	368	Converter	Good
STO	Stoughton Infant and Nursery School	£1.6m	312	Converter	Good
SFI	Sandfield Primary School	£1.1m	210	Sponsored	Good
SHF	Shalford Infant and Nursery School	£0.6m	120	Converter	Good

Please refer to the trust website for following for further information:

- <https://www.learningpartners.org/696/our-schools>
- <https://www.learningpartners.org/279/performance-and-results>

6 Our Aims & Objectives

The trust holds an overarching ambition for our pupils and our schools. We seek to foster a sense of ambition in young people and a confidence to fulfil their potential. To achieve this, we hold ourselves responsible to key benchmarks by which we will judge ourselves today and in the future. We express these as the Trust Dozen.

Each year the trust sets out development objectives, underpinned by the trust aims.

Our governing bodies report on these benchmarks annually.

The Trust Dozen

Provide all young people with an enjoyable, safe and stimulating education		Provide high quality professional development, support and opportunity to collaborate and learn
Make tangible gains for social mobility outcomes		Self-evaluate accurately, review and plan effective improvements
Improve academic outcomes for young people		Be fully staffed; with happy, challenged, content colleagues
Remain inclusive and serve the needs of all learners equitably		Be full and over subscribed
Deliver a broad and balanced curriculum which reflects both national benchmarks and locality		Ensure good financial management
Prepare young people for the next step in life as responsible citizens		Remain good or better

Our three-year strategic aims are simple. We want to:

- Drive improvement
- Develop talent, and
- Remain a resilient organisation in a world of changing demands and pressures

Our core business is to drive school improvement. Our schools all have one key focus – our children. We strive to provide the very best education, ensuring excellent outcomes for our young people and providing the very best start in life for those we serve.

We recognise that we need to balance academic success, social engagement and personal development to deliver holistic benefit to our students. To facilitate this, we need to develop talent across our communities. Our staff, governors and trustees must be invested in and supported in their roles. This is vital to create more effective school communities for our children.

Alongside this we have to be resilient across our organisation. We recognize the demands placed on organisations of our size, in terms of sustainability – both environmental and economic. To prepare our young people for a future world we must cater for the needs of today and not undermine their tomorrow.

These strategic aims will ensure that we fulfil our vision of being leading schools where children thrive.

For more information, please visit our website here:

<https://www.learningpartners.org/1544/our-strategy>

7 Our Teams

We see success being founded upon nurturing relationships, challenge, support and high expectations. We encourage an ethos of creativity, expression, dedication and achievement in each and every school, securing the best outcomes for all those in our care.

Schools are led locally by those who know their students, staff and communities best; their headteachers and local governing bodies. Staff are motivated, well-managed and well-led, with clear opportunities for career progression and development within the trust. We all want to imbue our children and young people with a lifelong love of learning and strive to provide quality education in a caring environment at the heart of the local community.

At the trust, we are better together.

Please refer to the trust website for further information:

- <https://www.learningpartners.org/275/our-people> - pen profiles
- <https://www.learningpartners.org/657/trust-governance> - governance structure

7.1 Members

Academy trusts are founded by members who have a general duty to exercise their powers, to further the academy trust's charitable purpose.

Our members are the conscience of our trust, ensuring that we all remain true to our aims and objectives. They are able to hear viewpoints from any member of the trust and they hold the trustees to account for the strategic operation of the trust. They appoint the trustees and have the power to remove the trustees if necessary. They appoint our auditors and meet annually.

7.2 The Board of Trustees

The trust board, led by a chairperson, is the decision-making body of the academy trust and is accountable and responsible for all the academies in the academy trust.

The trust is governed by a board of trustees. The board of trustees provides a strategic overview of the running of the trust, support the executive team and ensures that all schools in the trust are well-governed. We believe that trustees should be appointed for their professional, educational and governance skills. All trustees have the interests of every member school at their heart.

The board of trustees has set up a number of committees to conduct its work more thoroughly, co-opting additional professionals onto these committees to assist.

7.3 Governance Leaders Group

A group of governance leaders, comprising of all chairs of governors, and chairs of committees of the board, meet at least every term to improve the effectiveness of governance, through:

- Two-way communication between the Board of Trustees and the Local Governing Bodies (“communication”)
- Consultative strategic conversation (“strategic consultation”)
- Self-evaluation and training (“reflection”)

Further information regarding the role of the Governance Leaders Group can be found by clicking on the link below:

<https://app.governorhub.com/s/resourcesforlearningpartnersacademytrust/resources>

7.4 Headteachers

Learning Partners puts the education of young people first, driven by the headteachers’ group, comprised of the head teachers from our schools. This group drives the school improvement and academic strategies of the trust; monitoring standards and ensuring optimum collaboration between schools to enhance education and best practice in school management.

7.5 Executive Team

Our executive team supports headteachers and schools to deliver an excellent standard of education across the whole trust.

Through partnership, systems leadership and shared accountability, the team establishes the trust’s ways of working; implementing systems and structures which benefit children’s education, delivering smooth financial operation and improving school performance by investing in training and mentoring school staff.

The central team provides support and performs visits in numerous areas, including school improvement, risk management, compliance, H&S, finance reviews, internal and external audit.

7.6 Local Governing Bodies (LGBs)

The Board of Trustees believes in the importance of establishing a Local Governing Body (LGB) to oversee each school within the trust, in pursuit of the trust's vision and values, learning from best practice and taking into account the local community context. Further details regarding the role of LGBs can be found in the [LGB Terms of Reference](#)

7.7 School Improvement Team

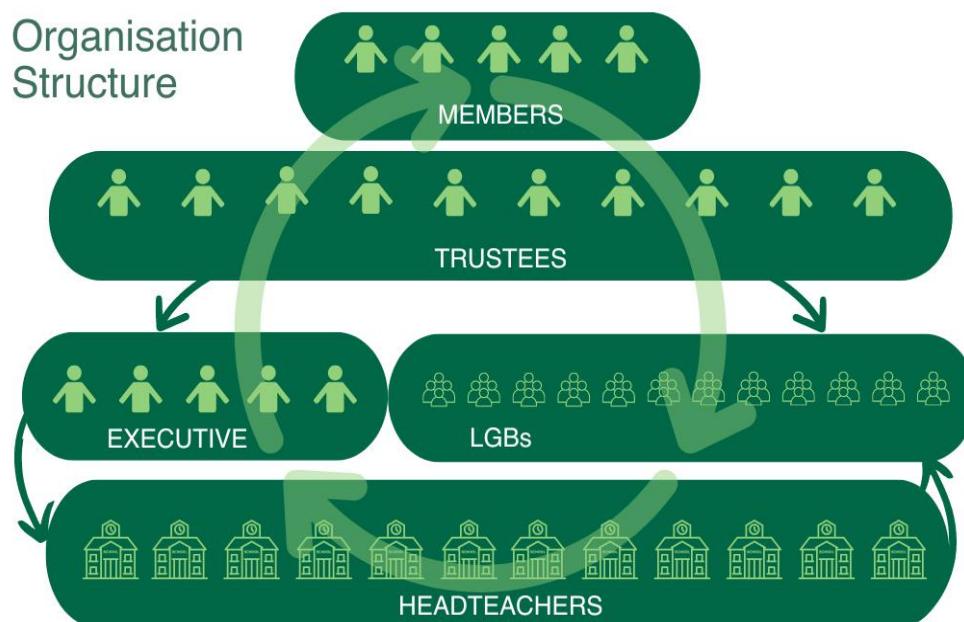
The School Improvement Team meets each half-term at a Trust Action Committee in order to review the educational performance of each school and to establish improvement team priorities. This meeting of the Education Directors, Primary School Improvement Advisor, School Improvement Partner (SiP) and some Trust Lead Practitioners provides an opportunity to prioritise and deploy support.

7.8 Operations Group

The Operations Group meets each half term to review the operational performance of each school and to establish priorities. This is a meeting of the school business managers and operational leads on the central team, with other school roles (e.g. premises managers, finance managers) invited where appropriate.

8 Our Organisation Structure

As a trust we are accountable to the secretary of state for education who exercises their duties through regional school commissioners. Internally, our governance structure is as follows:



We set an annual meeting cycle, which can be found on the [trust calendar](#).

Our governance structure is defined in more detail in a number of key documents, as outlined below. These are held within the trust's secure shared document site. Please refer to section 9.3.

Document	Description	Link
Internal Documents		
Articles of Association Members; Trustees	The trust is governed by members and a board of trustees, constituted under a Memorandum of Articles of Association.	https://www.learningpartners.org/346/key-information/category/37/key-governance-documents-1
Scheme of Delegation Trustees, Governors, Clerks	Powers delegated by the board of trustees to local governing bodies, headteachers and executive.	https://www.learningpartners.org/346/key-information/category/37/key-governance-documents-1
Governance Model in Action Trustees, Governors, Clerks	Quick guide to key responsibilities of the local governing body compared with trustees and executive	https://www.learningpartners.org/346/key-information/category/37/key-governance-documents-1
Committees of Board Terms of Reference Trustees	Terms of reference are available for the following committees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Audit & Risk - Resources - Education - Remuneration 	https://app.governorhub.com/s/resourcesforlearningpartnersacademytrust/resources
LGB Terms of Reference Trustees, Governors, Clerks	Terms of reference for the local governing body including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Role - Membership (constitution, chair & vice chair roles, appointments, terms of office, resignation and removal) - Accountability - Responsibility - Conflicts of Interest 	https://app.governorhub.com/s/resourcesforlearningpartnersacademytrust/resources
Trust Policies Schedule Trustees, Governors, Clerks	Details all statutory, regulatory and trust-initiated policies across the trust. It further specifies which committees of the board have responsibility for these policies (including the timeframe for review), considering Trust policies as well as School-Mandatory policies, for which local governing bodies have oversight.	https://app.governorhub.com/s/resourcesforlearningpartnersacademytrust/resources
Trust Policies Members, Trustees, Governors, Clerks	Master copies of all published trust policies. Templates for any available school mandatory policies.	https://app.governorhub.com/s/resourcesforlearningpartnersacademytrust/resources
Governor and Trustee Code of Conduct Trustees, Governors, Clerks	Principles and standards which we expect all governors and trustees to adhere to. Guidance on how to conduct school visits.	https://app.governorhub.com/s/resourcesforlearningpartnersacademytrust/resources

Document	Description	Link
Internal Documents (continued)		
School Improvement Handbook Trustees, Governors, Clerks	Provides an outline of how we seek to support schools and provide robust school improvement support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved teaching and student outcomes - Pedagogy team to support and challenge - Revised CPLD offer and professional networks - Trust lead practitioners team - Peer review and validation teams - Curriculum quality and collaboration - Data and assessment 	https://app.governorhub.com/s/resourcesforlearningpartnersacademytrust/resources
Glossary of Terms Trustees, Governors, Clerks	Summary of main abbreviations and terms used by the trust when discussing education.	https://app.governorhub.com/s/resourcesforlearningpartnersacademytrust/resources

9 Effective Governance

9.1 DfE Guidance

The Department of Education has set out key documents outlining our duties, as well as how governance can be effective. Trustees and governors should have working knowledge of these documents, as appropriate.

Document	Description	Link
External Documents		
Academy Trust Handbook Members, Trustees	For academy members, trustees, executive and finance teams. Explains requirements that trusts must follow set out in a series of topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Governance and financial responsibilities of academy trusts - Trusts' statutory responsibilities covering safeguarding and health and safety - Explains when trusts must obtain ESFA approval in advance for financial transactions. - Balances the need for effective financial governance with the freedoms that trusts need over their day to day business - Sets out the areas of HM Treasury's Managing Public Money applying to trusts - Must be complied with as a requirement of trusts funding agreements with the Secretary of State - Sets out that the ESFA may intervene where it has concerns about the trust's compliance with financial management requirements and describes potential consequences for trusts and individuals 	DfE Website link Updated on an annual basis, effective from 1 September each year.
Academy Trust Governance Guide Members, Trustees, Governors, Clerks	Guidance from the Department for Education that sets out the government's vision and priorities for effective school and trust governance by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Outlining the core role and functions of the governing board - Summarising and providing a first point of reference on all the legal duties on boards - Signposting to more detailed information, guidance and resources - Providing information on the support available to boards, to be effective 	DfE Website link This is usually updated on an annual basis.

Document	Description	Link
External Documents (continued)		
The Seven Principles of Public Life Members, Trustees, Governors, Clerks	The principles (also known as the Nolan Principles) apply to anyone who works as a public office-holder, including those in education. All public office-holders are both servants of the public and stewards of public resources and therefore must adhere to these principles: - selflessness - integrity - objectivity - accountability - openness - honesty - leadership	DfE Website link
Keeping Children Safe in Education Members, Trustees, Governors, Clerks	Statutory guidance that schools and colleges in England must have regard to when carrying out their duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This guidance must be read by all members, trustees and governors. This is supplemented by the trust's: - Child Protection & Safeguarding Trust Policy Statement - Child Protection & Safeguarding School Policy Arrangements – one for each school	DfE Website link

9.2 Training

We have developed a multi-tiered trust-wide training programme to further develop trustees, governors and clerks. This is supplemented by a governance conference and in some cases further targeted training procured by schools directly as needed.

Please refer to the following pages on the trust website for further information:

- [Governors library - Learning Partners Academy Trust](#)
- [Trust Calendar](#)

9.3 Governance Systems

For data protection and confidentiality reasons all those working in trust governance must use a school/trust email address (rather than personal) and hold papers in trust systems.

All trustees and governors have access to GovernorHub, a comprehensive online service to help governing boards run more efficiently. The system is fully GDPR-compliant and enables secure yet easily accessible document storage, membership management and communication tools. With GovernorHub Knowledge, governors can access expert advice, guidance and training.

Governors are responsible for maintaining their profiles on GovernorHub, including their declarations of interest, training records, contact information and all confirmations.

Governors will also be provided with a National Governance Association (NGA) membership, with access to governance advisors, online resources, free entry to governance events and many online training courses.

We maintain the following public information, which must be kept up-to-date.

Webpage / System	Link	Responsibility
Get Information about Schools	DfE website https://get-information-schools.service.gov.uk/	Trust Clerk - trust LGB Clerk - schools
Trust governance page	https://www.learningpartners.org/657/trust-governance	Clerk to Trustees
School governance page	Each school's page can be accessed from Trust governance arrangements page here under LGB section. There is standard required format for the governance page, as expressed here.	LGB Clerk
School publication compliance	There is standard required format for the publication compliance page.	Schools