



THE LINCOLNSHIRE
EDUCATIONAL TRUST LTD

Governance Framework - Academic Year 2017/18

Introduction

The Governance Framework sets out the mission and values of the Lincolnshire Educational Trust and the Trust's approach to improving performance. It sets out a clear and coherent governance framework with related scheme of delegation as critical to enhancing the performance of each academy. The Governance framework also sets out the role of Members, Directors/Trustees, Chief Executive, Academy Governing Committees (LGCs), Principals and Chief Finance Officer. It is subject to annual review by both Members and Trustees. As specified in the Memorandum of Association, The Lincolnshire Educational Trust (LET) is responsible for all aspects of work of its academies, but as it grows it need to strike the right balance between central control and delegation to the individual academy Principals and their LGC.

The framework has been in place for three years with minor modifications. The Trust now has all of its academies as good or outstanding and is confident that the new way in which the LGC's were ask to work is clearly established and allows for more local determination of agendas. The Operations Board has proved to be a very useful group and it will continue to work at coordinating work between each academy and seeking to achieve best value for money. The Trust Board will continue to demand feedback on each academies performance, but will seek to be more strategic in its work. The Trust will continue it approach of ensuring its central costs are very low so the maximum funding is available to ensure the children and young people in our academies make maximum progress.

The Mission of the Lincolnshire Educational Trust:

A Trust that seeks to develop academies that are schools of first choice through their educational excellence, developing young people to enhance their life chances through academic, cultural and sporting achievements, personal development and becoming confident life long learners.

The Lincolnshire Educational Trust values:

- Every child and young person enabled to achieve their maximum potential, with learners and teaching being at the heart of all that we do
- Parents and Carers who support their children's learning
- Our excellent staff who are trained and encouraged to bring out the true potential in others
- An aspirational, ambitious and innovative can do environment for all our learners and staff
- Partnership working where genuine collaboration, care and collective responsibility for one another takes place and enhances learning for all
- Intelligent accountability that is rigorous in its application and seeks to enable every child and young person to progress their learning
- High levels of integrity from everyone and the development of our learners and staff to take personal responsibility for their actions

- Making education enjoyable and creating a desire to want to learn more.

Individual academies within the Trust may add to or expand on the values, but such changes must be submitted to the Board of Trustees for approval.

Approach to Improvement

The Lincolnshire Educational Trust (LET) has a defined approach to managing its academies and is explicit in the underlining approach that Principals should apply when providing excellent education.

The LET approach to managing our academies is to delegate maximum responsibility to our Principals as we firmly believe that through their leadership, we can optimise the educational and developmental performance of our children and young people. To support the Principals the Chief Executive provides professional leadership and guidance. The Trust has established a rigorous accountability framework through the Trust Board and each Academy Governing Committee. The Trust Board focuses on the strategic issues and delegates to each Academy Governing Committee the focus on monitoring children and young people's learning, including individual learners progress and specific groups of learners, through constantly challenging the executive on the effectiveness of its support to learners.

The LET approach to raising standards in our academies is based on five tenets:

1. Setting high aspirations for every learner in all aspects of academy life.
2. Knowing every learner and designing support and encouragement in a manner that ensures each can grow and know they can achieve in a safe environment.
3. Providing Inspirational teaching by high quality staff that embeds literacy and numeracy in the curriculum, whilst providing a broad and diverse curriculum that captivates children and young people so they become life long learners.
4. Maximising and celebrating every learner's achievements and progress through high quality teaching and support.
5. Promoting exemplary behaviour that is characterised by a respectful and caring environment, where rules are understood and accepted.

Governance and Leadership

The Lincolnshire Educational Trust (LET) has three tiers of governing committees, with executive staff represented at both Director and Governor level to ensure effective and operationally coherent decision-making. In addition there is an operational management board, which represents Principals, Chairs of Governors and CEO to ensure effective management of the Trust. The scheme of delegated authority establishes the appropriate level for decisions to be made. The LET reserves the right to set difference levels of delegation for each academy based on their educational and/or finance performance. For 2017/18 all Academies will have the same level of delegated authority. The three tiers of governance are as follows:

Member (Sponsor)
 Director (Trustee) – Board of Trustees
 Governors – Academy Governing Committee (AGC)
 Management - Operations Board

Members

The Members are the sponsors who established the Trust and signed its Memorandum and Articles of Association. They appoint and dismiss Directors/Trustees, and they determine their own membership. There are three Members. The Members establish the constitution of the LET and determine its mission, ethos, values and key strategy. They must consult with Directors on issues regarding new Academies joining the Trust, however the decision remains with members. Members can also be Directors/Trustees, but to ensure independence and objectivity, only one member is a Trustee and that is the Chair. This group will meet at least twice a year to consider the performance of the Trust and assess the strategic direction. The University Governance team provides the clerking. Membership is as follows:

Professor Mary Stuart, Vice Chancellor University of Lincoln (Chair)
Professor Toby Wilkinson Deputy Vice Chancellor and Chair of Trustees
Roger Buttery (Independent Member)

Directors (Trustees) – Board of LET

The Directors/Trustees form the Board of Trustees of the LET and are Directors of the Trust. They set the strategic direction for the LET and are accountable to the Secretary of State for the performance of the academies within it. Directors can also be members of Academy Governing Committees (AGCs) and best practice indicates this supports the efficient running of the Trust.

The members believe their Board of Trustee must have the following skills: Expertise in strategic leadership; school improvement, teaching and learning, management and leadership in each sector of education; financial skills at charter accountancy status; legal expertise; HR skills; business development skills; educational research skills and experience as a school governor. The Board of Trustees will have a maximum of 10 members, two members will be independent of the University and Academies to ensure objectivity and external challenge. The CEO and CFO will be ex officio members of the Board, and the CEO will be the accounting Officer for the Trust. The Members priorities in establishing the Board membership are as follows:

1. To have the appropriate skill set to lead the Trust as it develops and Members will appoint up to four Trustees to ensure the appropriate skill set are met.
2. To ensure academy leadership is represented as set out in our approach, with a focus on school improvement and pupils progress there will be three executive Principals on the Trust Board, one representing secondary education, one primary education and one representing special education. (Note: At this stage it appears that all Principals are on the Board, however the maximum number will be three and they will be chosen by Members.)
3. To ensure Academy Governing Committees are represented there will be one place for a Chair of and AGC, chosen by the members.

The Board of Trustees has established the scheme of delegated authority for Executive staff and for AGCs. The Trust will apply a scheme of earned autonomy for AGCs, to reflect the success or otherwise of the academy. The Trust will usually meet four times per year. The Board is quorate when at least one-third of Directors/Trustees are present – in special cases two-thirds are required, see the Articles of Association for specific details. The Members appoint and determine the term of office for a Director. The University Governance team provides the clerking. Minutes will be approved at the following meeting and become available for publication 10 working days after that approval.

Decisions between meetings can be arrived at through electronic means with the approval of the Chair and providing at least 51% of the Board contribute to the decision, excluding the Trustee/CEO/CFO seeking the decision. This process will normally be carried out by the Chair, CEO or CFO.

Trust Board Membership:

Professor Toby Wilkinson Deputy Vice Chancellor University of Lincoln (Chair) and Chair of Governors
University Academy Holbeach

Professor Val Braybrooks MBE Dean of the Holbeach Campus University of Lincoln

Professor Ian Abrahams Head of Education University of Lincoln (Safeguarding Trustee)

Jenny Worth Chair of Governors Holbeach Primary Academy

Jenny Parry Group Head of Talent at Bakkavor (Independent Member)

Andy Breckon Chief Executive Officer Ex officio

Catherine Hamblett Chief Finance Officer Ex officio

Steve Baragwanath Principal University Academy Holbeach (Executive Principal Secondary Education)

Sue Boor Principal Holbeach Primary Academy (Executive Principal Primary Education)

Louise Stanton Principal Gosberton House Academy (Executive Principal Special Education)

TBC from Sainsbury's (Independent Member)

The Board, Governors and Executive staff will work to the Nolan seven principles of public life which underpin good governance and will not only avoid real but also perceived conflicts of interest with any connected party relationships. They must all declare any real or perceived interests.

Board of Trustees has one sub-committee the Audit Committee:

Professor Val Braybrooks MBE Trustee (Chair of Audit Committee)

Jenny Worth Trustee

David Braham (Independent member) Chief Finance Officer University of Lincoln

TBC (Independent member)

Andy Breckon Chief Executive Officer (In attendance)

Catherine Hamblett Chief Finance Officer (In attendance)

Marion Clare Finance manager (In attendance)

The Trust will use lead executives to bring key issues to the Board and to take action between Board meetings. It may from time to time establish task and finish groups to address key issues. Decision between meeting can be arrived at through electronic means with the approval of the Chair and providing at least 51% of the Board contribute to the decision, this process will be carried out by either the Chair, CEO or CFO.

Lead responsibility for Educational Performance - Principals and Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Lead responsibility for Finance – Chief Finance Officer (CFO)

Lead responsibility for Resources (Estate, Facilities and HR) – CEO

Schedule for Trust Meetings with some key areas for discussion – this is subject to change as issues emerge:

October

- Report and analysis of children's and young person's performance in the last academic year and any resultant actions.
- Update on other Academy issues, including staffing and pupil numbers
- Consider any capital bids and CIF submissions
- Safeguarding and Child Protection/Prevent
- Policy Approval

December

- Approve Annual Report and Financial submission to the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)
- Report on children's and young person's progress, update on other Academy issues, including staffing, attendance, behaviour, and pupil numbers
- Approval of the Academy Self-Evaluation (ASE)

- A summary financial report will be provided at the Board meeting.
- Report on Principal's performance management
- Policy Approval

April

- Report on children's and young person's progress, update on other Academy issues, including staffing, attendance, behaviour and pupil numbers
- Strategic Paper on key Academy Development Plans (ADP)
- Employment Manual Update
- A summary financial report will be provided at the Board meeting
- Approval of Risk Registers and Business Continuity Plans
- Policy Approval

July

- Report of children's and young person's performance and expected outcomes
- Approve budget for next financial year
- Receive Health and Safety Inspection Reports
- A summary financial report will be provided at the Board meeting
- Review of Governance Framework and Schemes of Delegation
- Complaints procedures
- Policy Approval

Note: Policy Approval – This agenda item will have all policy/guidance documents approved within the timescales set out by the Trust in the scheme of delegation. All policy/guidance papers must be submitted to Board members 2 weeks prior to the meeting and Board members will be expected to have commented at least 3 days prior to the meeting. The policy will only be debated if the Chair feels there is a key point that cannot be resolved.

Key Documents in Trust and Academy Governance and Management.

1. The Academy Self Evaluation (ASE) is a crucial document and the LET sees it as a working document. To ensure it is up to date each academy will be expected, where necessary, to update after each Board meeting. The draft ASE will be presented in October and then refined for approval by the AGC at its November meeting and approved at the December Trust meeting. Throughout the year it will be the role of the Principal to update the ASE, major changes should be taken back to the AGC. The Trust does not stipulate a common framework for ASE, however it must be suitable for both Section 5 and Section 8 inspections.

2. The Academy Development Plan (ADP) should be a short document, which incorporates key areas for development, including the key stands of improvement from the ASE. The Trust does not stipulate a common framework for ADP at this stage of its development. The ADP is discussed and agreed by the AGC in January. The Trust Board receives a short strategic paper on developments at its April meeting.

3. The Budget Plan for each academy is initially discussed with the CEO, CFO and Finance Manager; it is then discussed by the full AGC at its June meeting. This takes place before going to the Trust Board in July for approval. Throughout the year the Finance Manager reports on deviation from budget agreed at each AGC. Each academy must report its budget to the standard format agreed by the CFO and all financial procedures must conform to the ESFA Financial Regulations, which are published annually.

4. The Annual Report covers the previous academic year and is put together by our accountants with the help of our Finance staff. Trustees and Governors should note the Annual Report are consolidated financial statement and will be scrutinised by the Audit Committee, before submission to the December Trust Board meeting for agreement approval. It has to be submitted to the ESFA and published by the 31st December, as well as filed at Companies House.

5. All staff in the Multi Academy Trust has the same employer and as such has the same conditions of service. These are contained within the LET Employment Manual, which is updated annual. Any significant changes will be subject to consultation with staff. The Trust is responsible for Employment Manual and the Board must ratify major changes.
6. The annual Health and Safety Inspection is purchased each year from a qualified external provider. The report is discussed and action by the Resources sub committee and reported to the AGC.
7. Each academy must maintain a Risk Register to a common format and this is reported to the Audit committee annually. The following structure is used: Meeting educational standards, Complying with statutory and regularity requirements, including safeguarding, Financial risk, Building and Environmental risk and Operational risk.
8. The LET and each academy must maintain a Business Continuity Plan to a common format and this is reported to the Audit committee annually.
9. The LET has a common approach to dealing with complaints and its Complaints Procedures are published on our websites.
10. The Safeguarding Policy/ Child Protection will conform to recommendations from the local authority and include Prevent. It will be annually reviewed.

Governors and the Academy Governing Committee

The Governors form the Academy Governing Committee (AGC) for each academy. The AGC is a committee of the Trust and oversee the functions of academies as delegated to them by Board of Directors. The AGC is quorate when 51% of membership is present. The AGC has three key functions:

1. Ensuring the Academy is working to the Mission and Values of the LET
2. Holding the Principal and senior staff to account for the educational performance of the academy and its children and young people, and the performance management of staff; excluding the Principal
3. Overseeing the financial performance of the academy, ensuring good value for money and ensuring the Buildings and Facilities are fit for purpose

It is important that the AGC has the appropriate skills mix to be able to fulfil its delegated functions. Directors will ensure each AGC has the right skill set through its annual skills audit of Governors. Members will appoint the Chair of the AGC and a key priority in making that appointment will be the focus on improving educational standards. The AGC will usually meet five times per year, although the Chair may call further meetings with the approval of the Chair of the Trust. The Chair of the AGC with the CEO and Principal will agree the Chair of each committee. The AGC will have between 8 and 14 governors. Members will include the Principal, who is ex officio, 2 parents, 2 academy staff, a number of appointed governors and at least one Trustee/Director. The Deputy Principal is expected to attend although not a formal member of the AGC. The terms of office will be 4 years for non-Trustee/Directors. The LET will hold 2 training sessions for Governors during the year and this training will be for all governors in the Trust. UAH and HPA will have two sub committees, education and resources, and these meet prior to the full meeting and although governors can agree to be members of either sub committee, any governor can attend any sub committee. GHA will combine the standardised sub committee items into its basic agenda.

The AGCs will work to a standard 2-hour agenda with a specific focus for each meeting:

- 1 Apologies
- 2 Approval of notes of previous meeting
- 3 Declaration of Interest
- 4 Chair/CEO feedback on specific general issues and any Trust issues. (Items 1 to 4 - 5 mins)

- 5 Finance Report (5 mins)
- 6 Principal Report on key issues including staffing, artistic, cultural and sporting activities (10 mins)
- 7 Sub committee report back by Chair (10 mins) *see note 1.*
- 8 Focused area presentation and discussion (40 mins) *see note 1.*
- 9 Education monitoring and challenge (40 mins) *See Notes 2*
- 10 Policy Approvals (5 mins) *See note 3*
- 11 Community issues including admissions (5 mins)
- 12 AOB

The Finance Manager/Officer will attend for item 5.

The Chair of the AGC with the CEO and Principal will agree a lead Governor for each of the following areas: Safeguarding/Child Protection, SEN, Pupil Premium, Attendance and Behaviour. In addition at HPA Early Years and Transition will have a lead governor. These non-executive governors will work with the senior member of staff and jointly provide feedback to the Board.

Note 1. The normal meeting schedule will be as above but with a focus as set out below:

- Sept/Oct – a) Sub Com - Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy & Attendance and Behaviour
b) Focus area – Approaches to Teaching and Learning
- November – a) Sub Com - SENCO and Pupil Premium Reports
b) Focus area - Academy Self-Evaluation (ASE)
- Feb/March – a) Sub Com - Risk Register; Business Continuity Plan & Extra curricula activities (Not PE/Sport)
b) Focus area - Academy Development Plan (ADP)
- May – a) Sub Com – Buildings, Health and Safety Report & PE and Sport
b). Focus area - UAH Post 16 provision - HPA Early Years
- June – The subcommittee and focused area are combined to focus on the budget for 2018/19. and review of Policy renewals

Note 2: This area will focus on monitoring and challenging pupil performance:

- October – Detailed provisional analysis on the previous years performance and resultant actions
- November – Monitoring pupil progress and intake standards
- February – Monitoring pupil progress – High achievers
- May – Monitoring pupil progress – Disadvantaged pupils including pupil premium
- June – Monitoring pupil progress and opportunity to scrutinise pupil's work.

Gosberton House Academy

Will operate to the same framework under note 1, it will link the sub committee work into the main agenda and once a year will spend 50% of the March agenda having a detailed report on the Outreach Contract.

Note 3: Policy Approval – This agenda item will have all policy/guidance documents approved within the timescales set out in the scheme of delegation. All policy/guidance papers must be submitted to Board members 1 week prior to the meeting and Board members will be expected to have commented at least 3 days prior to the meeting. The policy will only be debated if the Chair feels there is a key point that cannot be resolved.

Management - Operations Board

The Operations Board is intended to help ensure the Trust is managed effectively and seeking best value for money. It will move round academies. The core members will be Principals, Chair or nominated Governor if Chair cannot attend and CEO who will chair the meetings. In addition business managers/finance officers may also attend for parts of the meetings. This group will coordinate meetings, agree agendas, review contracts, and agree any joint ventures. The meetings will last for approximately 90 minutes with up to 2 per term. This will be reviewed after 12 months.

Principal

The Principal has delegated powers with very clear responsibilities and authority for the day-to-day running of their academy and they are accountable to the Directors/AGCs, depending on where responsibility is delegated within the Trust. The aim of the Trust is to give maximum authority to its Principals, within good governance, to enable them to optimise the performance of their academy. The level of autonomy may vary depending on the performance of each academy.

The LET will appoint a statutory Principal for each academy and see these post holders have key responsibilities for the performance of the individual academy as well as some joint responsibility to work together for the benefit of the Trust. The Members/Trustees may delegate to a committee, to any Trustee holding executive office, to the Chief Executive, to the Principals of Academy or the Chief Finance Officer, such of their powers or functions as they consider being desirable to be exercised by them where such delegation is possible. They do not necessarily have to delegate the same to each academy, but where it differs it is best practice to inform that Academy of the reasons for the changes or differences.

Chief Executive Officer of the LET

This post provides the professional leadership of the Trust working and coaching the Principals, liaising with the DfE and its agencies and working to improve the governance and accountability of the LET. The Chief Executive (CEO) has the day to day operational lead responsibility working with the Chair of the Trust and the Chief Finance Officer. The CEO will have responsibility for carrying out the annual performance management of each Principal and reporting back to members to agree the next year's targets. They will oversee strategic planning and relationships with outside bodies. The CEO will represent the Trust during any Ofsted inspections. The CEO will appoint the external adviser to each Academy.

Chief Finance Officer of the LET

The Finance Director will support the Accounting Officer to ensure the Trust's compliance with the Academy's Financial Handbook issued by the ESFA. They will have responsibility for the preparation and monitoring of the budget. A key role will be setting the annual budget for each academy and within virement regulations will report against agreed budgets at AGC. They will have responsibility for the preparation of the annual accounts. Trust management accounts will only be produced at Board meetings. They will delegate to academy finance officers day to day control within the agreed scheme of delegation. They will be the lead for dealing with the ESFA and will report directly to the Trust at each Board meeting. They will establish audit facilities to ensure a process is in place for independent checking of the Trust's financial controls, systems, transactions and risks.