Apex Collaborative Trust

Terms of Reference

Trust Quality Descriptions

In the Schools White Paper, the Department published five pillars of quality for multi academy trusts.

1. High-Quality and Inclusive Education
2. School Improvement
3. Workforce
4. Finance and Operations
5. Governance and Leadership

The Board must be:

- ambitious for all children and young people
- infused with a passion for education and a commitment to continuous school improvement that enables the best possible outcomes.
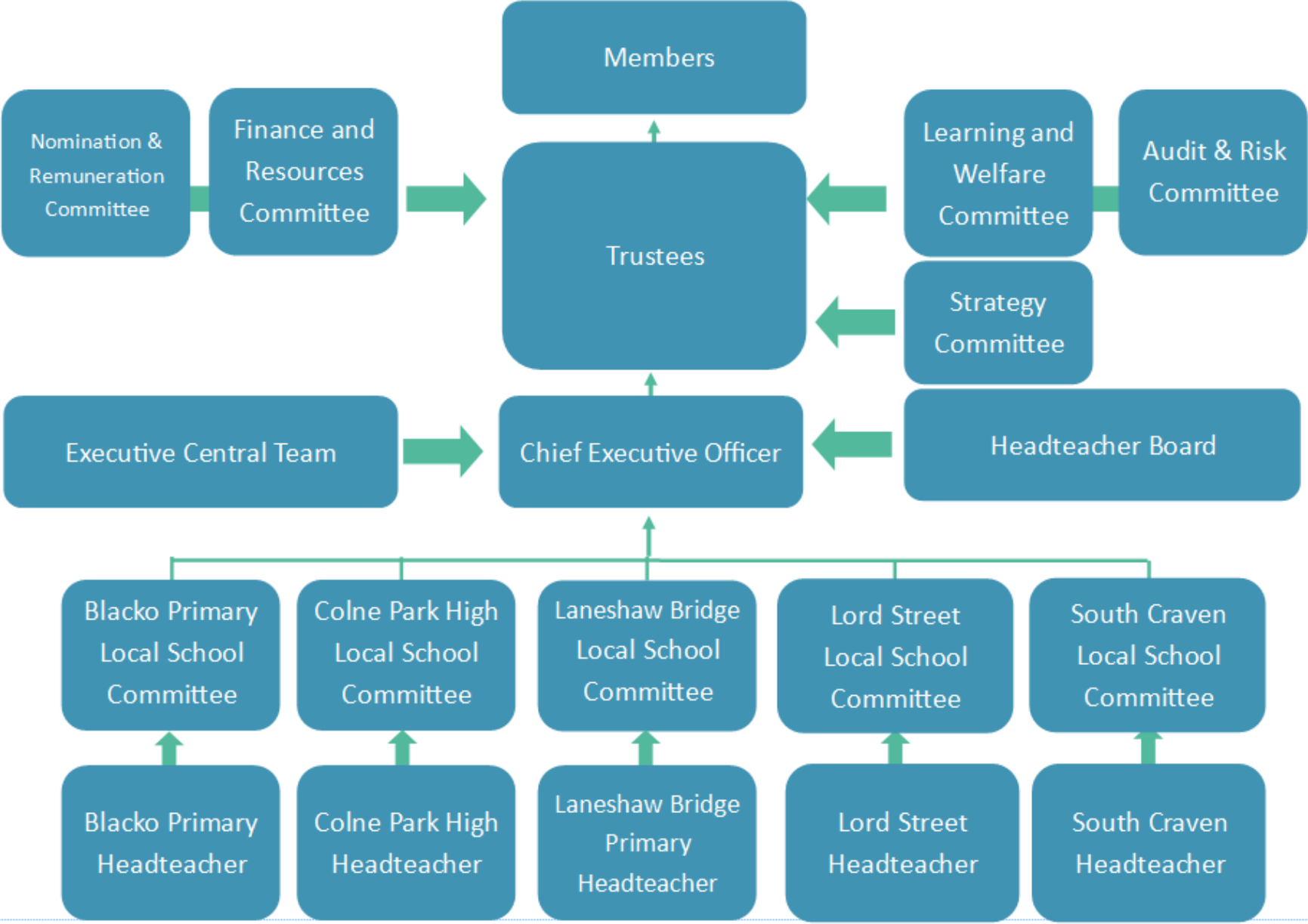
Governance must be:

- grounded in reality as defined by both high-quality objective data and a full understanding of the views and needs of pupils/students, staff, parents, carers and local communities,
- driven by inquisitive, independent minds and through conversations focussed on the key strategic issues which are conducted with humility, good judgement, resilience and determination.

The DfE has identified 16 competencies for governing bodies, underpinned by a foundation of important principles and personal attributes. In the diagram below, the competencies are grouped under the headings of the six features of effective governance (as set out in the [Academy trust governance guide](#)).

Organisational Structure

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                                    ┌──────────────┐
                                    │   Members    │
                                    └──────────────┘
                                           ▲
┌──────────────┐  ┌──────────────┐  ┌──────────────┐  ┌──────────────┐  ┌──────────────┐
│ Nomination & │  │ Finance and  │  │              │  │ Learning and │  │ Audit & Risk │
│ Remuneration │──│  Resources   │─▶│   Trustees   │◀─│   Welfare    │──│  Committee   │
│  Committee   │  │  Committee   │  │              │  │  Committee   │  │              │
└──────────────┘  └──────────────┘  │              │  └──────────────┘  └──────────────┘
                                    │              │◀─┌──────────────┐
                                    │              │  │   Strategy   │
                                    │              │  │  Committee   │
                                    └──────────────┘  └──────────────┘
                                           ▲
┌──────────────────┐              ┌──────────────────┐              ┌──────────────────┐
│ Executive Central│─────────────▶│ Chief Executive  │◀─────────────│  Headteacher     │
│      Team        │              │     Officer      │              │     Board        │
└──────────────────┘              └──────────────────┘              └──────────────────┘
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Blacko Primary Local School Committee	Colne Park High Local School Committee	Laneshaw Bridge Local School Committee	Lord Street Local School Committee	South Craven Local School Committee
Blacko Primary Headteacher	Colne Park High Headteacher	Laneshaw Bridge Primary Headteacher	Lord Street Headteacher	South Craven Headteacher

Structure with Responsibilities

The following structure is proposed, to provide an effective framework for the Trustees to fulfil their responsibilities.

Members		
Hold the Board of Trustees to account for the effective governance of the Trust. Ensure that the charitable objectives of the organisation are being met (advancing education for the public benefit).		
• Appoint and remove Members • Appoint and remove Trustees	• Appoint or re-appoint the external auditors • Amend the Articles of Association *if required*	• Receive the Trust's financial year end accounts
Membership		
Members (*minimum of 3*)		

Board of Trustees		
Accountable body for the operation of the Trust and ensures delivery of the Trust's funding agreements with the Secretary of State for Education. Sets the strategic vision and direction and monitors progress towards realisation of the Trust's aims and objectives.		
• Approve, monitor and review relevant policies • Approve and monitor implementation of the Trust Development Plan • Approve the annual accounts • Approve the annual Trust budget	• Ensure compliance with duties under company law and charity law • Set the Trust's vision and values and ensure they underpin the way in which the Trust operates	• Approve the Trust board's terms of reference together with its committees so that all its responsibilities are effectively discharged • Approve a Scheme of Delegation for the Trust • Hold the CEO to account for the overall performance of the Trust
The Trust Board delegates a number of its responsibilities to committees or to individual nominated governors to increase efficiency and make use of the expertise of individuals. All of the committees report to the Board via minutes of meetings and/or specific reports. Chairs of committees meet at defined points with the Chair of the Trust to review progress on key priorities. It might be agreed in certain cases that reports are 'by exception', only highlighting concerns rather than detailing all aspects of the committee's or nominated governor's scrutiny. Each school has a Local School Committee, which is accountable for standards in that school. Chairs of Local School Committees meet termly at the Strategy Committee, which has a key role on setting the direction of the Trust in line with the ethos and values. LSCs will have nominated governors to scrutinise specific aspects of the school's provision.		
Membership		
Trustees CEO attends CFO attends		

Strategy committee

The body through which the Trust establishes its short, medium and long-term priorities. It ensures these are developed and shared across all tiers of governance and between executive and school leaders so that they are prioritised by leaders at all levels. This is an advisory committee – the Trust Board retains responsibility for setting the vision and approving the development plan.

• Regularly review the Trust progress in relation to its intent, ethos and values • Identify whole Trust and school priorities to inform Trust and school improvement planning	• Ensure clear communication between the tiers of governance • Equipping the Trustees with the knowledge required to carry out their roles	• Ensure leaders at all levels collaborate to shape the direction of the Trust

Membership

Trustees
Chairs of Governors
Executive Central Team
Headteachers

Learning and Welfare Committee	Audit and Risk Committee	Finance and Resources Committee	Nomination and Remuneration Committee
Monitors academic progress and ensures high standards in the quality of teaching and learning within the Trust's schools.	Ensures schools are compliant with current regulations, assesses risk on behalf of each school and the Trust and ensures that effective internal and external auditing is arranged.	Responsible for and has oversight of the overall finances, staffing and premises of the Trust.	Monitors and evaluates whole-trust governance arrangements and has responsibilities in determining specific remuneration packages for Trust executive leaders.
• Approve, monitor and review relevant policies • Curriculum and extra-curricular provision – intent, implementation • Set academic performance targets and review progress against them • Ensure systems are in place across the Trust to quality assure teaching standards and hold the CEO to account for those standards • Hold the CEO to account for standards of academic progress • Collective worship • Ensure needs of pupils with SEND are met	• Approve, monitor and review relevant policies • Establish systems for stakeholder engagement • Regular monitoring of Trust improvement plan in terms of completion of identified actions and assessment of their impact to date. • Risk register • Directing scope of internal audit • Consider content of and response to the findings of the external audit	• Approve, monitor and review relevant policies, including pay and appraisal and admissions annually • Ensure pupil premium and other targeted funding (e.g. literacy/numeracy catch-up funding) is used effectively across the Trust • Formulate and set the budget and approve significant variances – establish effective financial controls • Approve Schools Resource Management Self-Assessment • Ensure effective H&S systems are in place • Property and asset management, ensuring full compliance	• Approve, monitor and review relevant policies, including Governance and Accountability Handbook • Systematically evaluate the effectiveness and impact of governance throughout the Trust • Ensure that the board and its committees have the necessary skillset to discharge their duties effectively • Monitor attendance of governors throughout the Trust • Set pay, conditions and performance management policy for executive leaders

• Set behaviour and attendance targets and review progress against them • Ensure effective systems for safeguarding are in place • Monitor pupil welfare – exclusions, racist incidents • Review top line performance data in IDSR, LSIP, School performance tables and ensure appropriate plans are in place to address weaknesses		• Ensure effective provision of lunches including free school meals • Set Trust term time date parameters • Ensure compliance with the ESFA's 'Academy Trust Handbook' and the Trust's Financial Procedures Manual • To make decisions in respect of service level agreements, contracts and insurance • Oversee development and implementation of a fully costed five-year estates development plan • Conduct an annual financial benchmarking exercise • Oversee development and implementation of the Trust IT strategy	• Establish systems to appoint and remove Trust appointed governors • Ensure that all governors at all levels receive training to enable them to be effective in their roles • Ensure effective communication between each tier of Trust governance
Membership			
5 Trustees CEO attends	5 Trustees CEO attends CFO attends	5 Trustees CEO attends CFO attends	5 Trustees CEO attends CFO attends