



Brigantia Learning Trust

Governance Handbook

2017

Contents

Contents	2
Foreword by the Chair of the Board	3
Tiers of governance	4
Documentation relevant to each tier of governance	5
Governance principles / approach	6
An overview of Trust governance	7-8
Accountability for decisions	9
Trust values	10

Foreword from the Chair of the Trust Board

This document sets out the principles and formal arrangements for governance across the Brigantia Learning Trust. As a charitable Trust we are accountable for:

- 1. The educational outcomes and welfare of all children attending Brigantia Learning Trust schools;*
- 2. The livelihoods of our employees;*
- 3. The prudent management of taxpayers' money; and*
- 4. The stewardship of public buildings and land.*

The quality and effectiveness of our governance is critical to ensure resources are used, academies are effective and best value is secured for the taxpayer.

At the heart of governance in a charity like Brigantia Learning trust is the non-executive team, made up entirely of volunteers. These individuals bring their experience and judgement, and accept accountability, not for material benefit, but for the greater public good. In particular to improve the life chances of the pupils / young people in our academies.

The law places accountability for the educational outcomes and financial diligence of the Trust firmly with the Trustees and the CEO as Accounting Officer. Much of this responsibility is located in the Trust Board. However, a fundamental principle for us is that effective governance is best delivered as close as possible to the point of impact of decisions. For this reason we have developed a governance structure that delegates key accountability to our Local Academy Boards (LABs).

Together, the Trust Board and LABs, provide the overview and scrutiny of the management and governance of Brigantia academies.

The purpose of this document is to provide clarity on the structure by which the different elements of governance work together for the benefit of the whole Trust. We have based this model on current guidance, and our experience as a growing Trust. We will review the details of these governance arrangements annually as a partnership of LAB Governors, Directors / Trustees and Members.

Thank you for your contribution to our Trust and this important work.

David Drayson

Chair of the Trust Board

Tiers of Brigantia Learning Trust governance

Brigantia Learning Trust has three tiers of governance. Members, Trustees / Directors (Trust Board) and Local Academy Boards. The table below shows key characteristics of each tier. The functions and responsibilities of each governance tier are stated in their relevant Terms of Reference.

Governance Tier	Number	Meeting schedule	Notes
Members	7	AGM	Chair of Trust Board is a Member but cannot be Chair of Members
Trustees / Directors (Trust Board)	7-9	½ termly	Chair Vice Chair Chairs of LABs (currently 3) are also Trustees.
Local Academy Boards (LAB) governors	7-14 (dependent on need of each LAB)	½ termly	Each LAB will have a Chair & Vice Chair The Chair will be a Trustee The Trust will have 3 LABs: 1. Longley Park Academy Board (LPAB) 2. Secondary Academy Board (SAB) 3. Primary Academy Board (PAB)

The Executive Team

The Executive Team is the executive management arm of the Academy Trust. Its members - Academy Principals, Principal Inclusion and the Business Director, are led by the Executive Principal. Together with staff (supported and challenged by the Trust Board and LABs) they ensure the required outcomes are achieved in accordance with the vision and direction of the Trust Board.

Documentation relevant to each element of governance

Key Trust documents support and underpin the work of governance at each level / tier. These are available via the academy / Trust websites.

All	<p>Governance Handbook - outlines the tiers and principles of governance across the Trust.</p> <p>Scheme of Delegation - identifies the governance tier at which decisions & functions sit.</p>
Members	<p>Articles of Association – the constitution of our Academy Trust specifying the composition of the membership and how it conducts business.</p> <p>Scheme of Delegation.</p> <p>Terms of Reference for Members</p>
Trustees / Directors / Board	<p>Articles of Association – the constitution of our Academy Trust specifying the objects, powers, composition of the Trustees and how they conduct business.</p> <p>Terms of reference for the Trust Board</p> <p>Scheme of Delegation.</p>
Local Academy Boards (LABs)	<p>Scheme of Delegation</p> <p>Terms of Reference</p>
Executive	<p>Scheme of delegation of executive powers.</p>

Governance Principles / approach

Brigantia Learning Trust is a charitable voluntary organisation which relies on the input of a number of non-executive volunteers, supported by an experienced team of staff. As it grows, and the number of schools for which it is responsible increases, it is vital the governance at every level is of the highest quality.

1. The Brigantia Learning Trust Governance Handbook sets out the fundamental principles of the organisation and lays down the rules for its governance. The Handbook is supported by the Articles of Association and the detail set out in the Scheme of Delegation and Terms of Reference.
2. The governance principles of Brigantia recognise the importance of developing and sustaining an appropriate, robust, supportive and challenging relationship between governance and the Executive Team to best meet Trust objectives.
3. Financial governance must, as a foundation, be compliant with the principles and regulations set out in the Academies Financial Handbook. Brigantia aims to go beyond this foundation to provide excellence in its governance.
4. Governance is underpinned by a common understanding about who is responsible for providing an input to decision making and who has the decision-making responsibility (see Scheme of Delegation)
5. Effective governance in our Trust is supported by the following:
 - a. Trust Members – the guardians of the Constitution
 - b. Trust Board – the Directors / Trustees
 - c. Local Academy Boards – the Local Governors
 - d. The Executive Team
6. The Trust Board has overall responsibility and ultimate decision-making authority for all the work of the Academy Trust, including the establishment and maintenance of the Academies.
7. The governance of each Academy shall be delegated, via the Scheme of Delegation, to the relevant Local Academy Board (LAB).
8. The right recruitment and selection of governors, at all tiers, is vital to secure strong Trust governance. As a result due regard will be made to the Governance Competency Framework (based on DfE guidance January 2017) and the balance of skills, qualities and competencies at the level of Member, Trustee / Director and Local Academy Boards.
9. We will continue to develop our governance arrangements to shape and take account of best practice in the sector.

Overview of key elements of Trust governance

Members

Brigantia has “**Members**” who are best viewed as guardians of the constitution, changing the Articles if necessary and ensuring the charitable object is fulfilled. The Members appoint Trustees and can exercise reserve powers to appoint and remove Trustees. It is, however, anticipated that this power will rarely, if ever, be exercised. The Academy Trust will ordinarily have five Members.

Trust Board

The corporate management and trustee responsibility for the actions of the company is vested in the “**Trustees**” of the Academy Trust (together, referred to as “**the Trust Board**”).

The Trustees are personally responsible for the actions of the Academy Trust and the Academies and are accountable to the Members, to the Secretary of State for Education and to the wider community for the quality of the education received by all pupils of the Academies and for the expenditure of public money. The Trustees are required, as trustees and pursuant to the Funding Agreements, to have systems in place through which they can assure themselves of the quality, safety and good practice of the affairs of the Academy Trust.

The role of the Trust Board is reflected in Scheme of Delegation and Terms of Reference. Overall its role is to:

1. Set the strategic vision, ethos and strategy for the Academy Trust and its academies;
2. Establish the governance structures for the Academy Trust, in keeping with the Articles of Association;
3. Provide clarity, through the published Terms of Reference and the Scheme of Delegation Matrix, of the level at which LABs will have authority.
4. Ensure that there is a strong and effective executive leadership structure and personnel in place across the Trust;
5. Scrutinise the performance of all academies and the Trust and ensure senior leaders are challenged to improve.
6. Scrutinise the Trust’s financial capability and management systems to ensure compliance with the Academies Financial Handbook, and deliver best value for money;
7. Ensure risk management policy and practice is robust.
8. Set Trust-wide policy and monitor adherence.
9. Develop the Trust Board to ensure that it has appropriate capacity, skills and succession planning to secure effective governance.

Local Academy Boards (LABs)

The role of a Local Academy Boards is an important one. In developing our governance arrangements, the Trust Board has sought to delegate responsibility to LABs who are closest to the impact of decision making.

The LABs are accountable to Trust Board (who in turn are accountable to the Department for Education) as well as to the communities they serve.

The broad duties of the Local Academy Board are summarised as:

- To contribute to and fulfil the vision and ethos of Brigantia Trust in so far as it relates to the Academy. Ensuring that the Academy achieves the aims and ambitions it has for its pupils / young people, and works in partnership across the Trust.
- To develop, implement and review the annual strategic plan for the Academy, focussing on the Academy's performance, and have regard to any agreed priorities identified by the Trust Board;
- To act as a critical friend to the Academy's senior leadership team, and provide challenge and hold them to account for all aspects of the Academy's performance.
- To develop the academy annual financial and resource plan, alongside the Principal, Business Director and Executive Principal, and submit this for approval to the Trust Board. Monitor spending against the financial plan, keep within the agreed out turn parameters and follow appropriate risk and financial management policies and practices.
- Ensure the academy staffing structure is fit for purpose; ensure robust monitoring of staff performance, and all Trust HR policy and procedures are followed.
- Engage fully and openly with any inspection, whether by Ofsted, the Trust or any other appropriate public body to whom the academy is accountable.
- Follow all agreed Trust policy.
- Regularly access feedback and the perspective of pupils / young people, staff and parents / carers.

Accountability for decisions

The Trust Board delegates authority to two key groups in order to ensure the effective leadership and governance of the Academy Trust. The two key groups are:

1. Executive leadership and management team (the Executive Team);
2. Local Academy Boards.

The relationship between the Trust Board, the Executive Team and the Local Academy Boards is characterised as a partnership to realise a common vision and a common purpose.

In the case of the Trust Board and Local Academy Boards, the relationship between the two tiers of governance is also based on the principles of:

1. No duplication of governance.
2. A clear Scheme of Delegation. This will determine where responsibilities and decisions reside. However, governance should be as close as possible to the point of impact of decision-making.

The Scheme of Delegation provides clarity as to who the decision makers are for different levels of decisions.

Intervention

The Trust Board remains ultimately responsible for the Academy Trust and the conduct of the Academies. However, there will be circumstances (the exception rather than the norm) where the Trust Board might need to intervene and, for example, withdraw delegated authority in a particular element of governance.

In such circumstances, the Trust Board, along with the Executive Team, would work closely with any Academies concerned and those involved in their governance. They would be expected to promptly implement any advice or recommendations made by the Trust Board and the Executive Team.

The Trust Board reserves the right to review or remove any power or responsibility which it has delegated, in particular, in circumstances where serious concerns in the running of an Academy (or Academies) are identified, including where:

1. There are concerns about financial matters;
2. Insufficient progress is being made against educational targets (including where intervention by the Secretary of State is being considered or carried out);
3. There has been a breakdown in the way the Academy is managed or governed; or
4. The safety of pupils or staff is threatened, including a breakdown of discipline.

Brigantia Learning Trust Values - Our Trust values state what is important to us and why we exist. All governors and staff, at every level, are expected to embrace and champion these values through their individual role.

We believe our understanding of local context, our long term commitment to the community, our experience of long-term partnership and our proven expertise means we can lead the challenge to provide an outstanding education for local children / young people.

We passionately believe in the following which will underpin the work of our Trust and is reflected in current practice:

1. Local children / young people have boundless potential and deserve the very best.
2. A broad and rounded education so that all children are properly prepared to take their place in a complex and ever changing world.
3. Individual school / college identity, earned autonomy and each closely aligned to the community it serves.
4. All schools / colleges striving to become and remain outstanding.
5. A seamless 0-19+ educational journey and experience for every child; that leads to clear progression opportunities into further study or pathways to employment.
6. That partnership works best when everyone shares the same ethos and goals, and commitment is over the long-term.
7. That a partnership of local Sheffield schools / colleges is best placed to deliver educational excellence in our community now and in the future.
8. Genuine partnership provides an opportunity to share innovation and best practice, streamline systems and approaches; and better use resources when there is a clear educational benefit.
9. The bedrock of the Trust is outstanding staff teams. We care about staff wellbeing and are committed to attracting, developing, retaining and promoting them through outstanding CPD and career development.
10. We like to share, shun isolation and believe partnership brings capacity, expertise, support, challenge and strength.
11. Additional services for children and families can operate with and through our local Trust.

The words ***creating excellence together*** have been carefully chosen to reflect our commitment to continuous improvement and working together in genuine partnership.