

June 2023



Scheme of Delegation

Committee	Board of Trustees
Author	Richard Hover – Chair of Trustees
Version	2.0
Approved on	
Signature	
New Review date	April 2024

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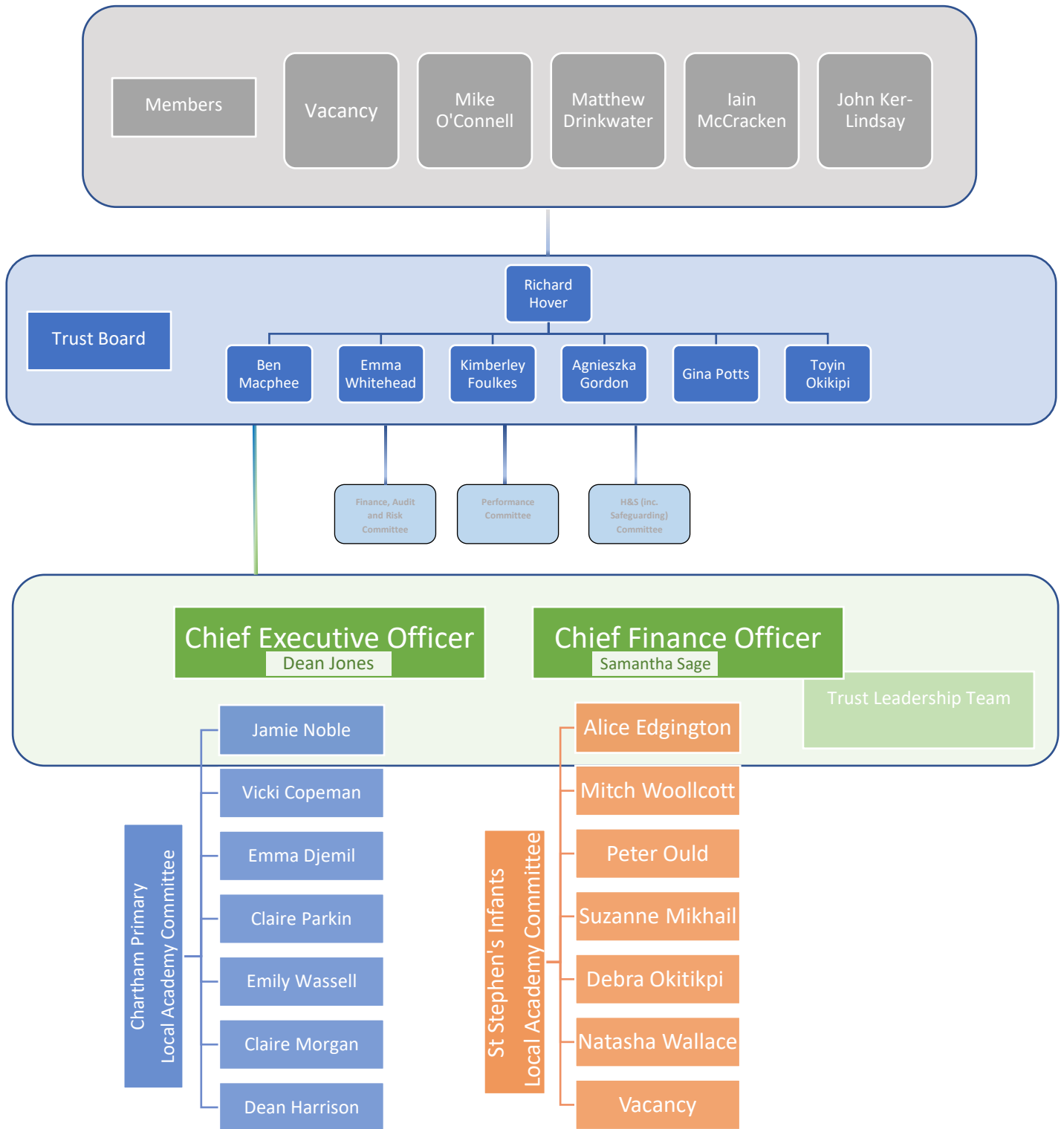
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TRUST GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE



ABOUT INSPIRA ACADEMY TRUST

- A unique set of schools; infant, primary rural and urban areas.
- The Trust board and Members value the differences between schools within The Trust.
- Each school will reflect The Trust's ethos and support the community it serves.
- The principles of The Trust will be underpinned by 'a local Trust for local schools' unique selling proposition and will be enriched by a combination of community and church schools.
- The Trust mission statement and vision emphasises the importance of a varied and enriched curriculum to raise standards for all.
- A commitment to safeguarding and promoting pupil and staff well-being underpins the Trust's values.
- The Trust will have a distinct focus on individualised professional development for its staff through a systematic coaching programme closely matched to staff needs and school priorities in order to retain a highly skilled workforce and deliver the school improvement plan.
- The Trust will develop partnerships and collaborate with other local Multi-Academy Trusts, Higher Education Institutions, and schools to provide opportunities for staff at all levels to engage in continuing professional development and to provide mutual support.
- The Trust will be committed to sponsor other schools as part of its commitment to its growth plan.

MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

Our Mission is to

- Create a welcoming environment in our schools where everyone feels happy, safe, included, and are empowered to develop and practice independence.
- Instill a love of learning and encourage pride in all achievements through the foundations of a high-quality curriculum.

Our Vision is to

- Be a high performing Trust with uncompromising standards and high expectations.
- Champion learning at the centre of our communities.
- Promote and ensure the well-being and safeguarding of pupils at all times so they feel secure, happy, and safe.
- Enrich learning through engaging indoor and outdoor environments.
- Have passionate, high-quality staff who encourage a love of learning, evoke curiosity, and stimulate imagination.
- Enable pupils to achieve their potential, be well prepared for the next stage of their education and instill aspirations for their futures.
- To offer opportunity for all through the promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion whilst challenging social injustice and inequality enabling bright futures for all.

Our Way is to

- Be guided by our key values; perseverance, kindness, respect, honesty, and fairness.
- Make learning fun, challenging, and stimulating, using a creative and cutting-edge curriculum.
- Provide an atmosphere where pupils and staff feel safe, secure, and valued and are empowered to achieve their full potential.
- Be a family of schools strengthened by the support from parents/carers, children, and the wider school community.
- Encourage and support the development and professional learning of staff and Trustees/governors, to achieve the highest standards for all.
- Develop strong local partnership links and collaboration across local schools, Higher Education Institutions, and other Multi-Academy Trusts.

PRINCIPLES FOR DELEGATION

As a Multi Academy Trust (MAT), the Trust Board of Inspira Academy Trust (IAT) is accountable, in law, for all major decisions concerning the academies (schools).

However, the Trust Board is not required to carry out all the Trust's governance functions, and many can and should, be delegated to the CEO and Executive Team, the Trust Board's Committees, and Local Academy Committees (formerly Local Governing Bodies). The decision to delegate a function is made by the Trust Board. Without such delegation, the individual or Committee has no power to act.

The principle governing document in Academy Trusts is the Articles of Association. The articles set out the charitable purpose of the Trust, providing a framework for Trusts to act within both company and charity law. They will not however include the specific detail of the Trust's chosen governance structure and how governance functions have been delegated.

The Scheme of Delegation (SoD) is the key document that defines lines of responsibility and accountability in a MAT to ensure that the Members, Trustees, Trust Board Committees, Local Academy Committees, Executive Leadership Team and Headteachers understand their role and responsibilities.

Members, Trustees, and Committees should meet regularly enough to discharge their responsibilities.

This overarching SoD for decision making in the Trust should not be confused with the written Scheme of Delegation of Financial powers referred to in the ESFA Academy Trust Handbook.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

MEMBERS

- Guardians of governance.
- Know what good governance looks like.
- No deviation from charitable objective.
- Limited but distinct role.
- Appoint and remove Trustees.
- Receive copy of annual report.
- Meet min once a year – AGM.
- Separate from Trustees.
- Dissolve the Trust.

Members appoint Trustees to run the company on their behalf. The Members are the signatories to the memorandum – or their replacements. The DfE expects there to be at least 5 Members. If the Trust were to have any fewer than 4 Members each would become a person of significant control and would have to be declared as such at Companies House. No more than 19.9% of Members can be local authority associated persons; no staff can be Members, nor can any member occupy staff establishment roles as a volunteer.

The Members are analogous to shareholders in a company of that structure. They established the company and oversee it. They have some specific powers:

- Can amend the articles of association (with consent) or change the company's name.
- Can appoint replacement Members to seek to maintain 5 Members.
- Can appoint up to 9 Trustees – and may remove any Trustee.
- Can appoint the auditors and receive the company's annual report and accounts.
- Can issue a direction (by special resolution) to Trustees to act in a particular way.

Members appoint Trustees to “run the company on their behalf” so responsibility for the Trust's business rests with Trustees. Members should be “eyes on and hands off,” but should monitor effectiveness and act to address issues – challenging Trustees to address issues or remove some or all Trustees and appoint others. Therefore, Members need to be kept informed so they can be assured that governance is effective, that the charitable purpose is not threatened – and that Trustees collectively have the right skills. Members collectively need the skills to be able to make that assessment.

- The Chair of Trustees will be responsible for ensuring that Members are kept informed about the activities and progress of the Trust.
- There will be an Annual General Meeting at which Trustees will present the annual report and accounts – and will invite Members to confirm the appointment of auditors.
 - The Chair of Trustees will call an AGM (and any other general meetings as required). Trustees and Governors are invited to attend and speak at. The quorum for any General Meeting will be 2 Members (actual or proxy).
- Members will be welcome to visit schools – restrictions permitting – by appointment.
- Members will be able to ask questions – directed to the Chair in the first instance – with answers shared with all Members and Trustees.
- Members may individually or collectively request a general meeting of the Company to discuss common questions.
- Where Members need to appoint an additional or replacement Trustee, Trustees have completed/ will complete a skills matrix with a view to ensuring that a range and balance of skills are represented across the Trustee board. Where a Trustee resigns or is removed the remaining Trustees will consider what skills would benefit the board and seek to attract candidates on that basis. Applicants will complete the skills matrix. Members will then – if possible – be given a choice of candidates from whom to appoint. Local Academy Committees may be a source of candidates.

TRUSTEES

- Ultimate accountability for all academies (schools) within the Trust.
- Accountable for Trust performance in delivering its "charitable objects".
- Strategic decision makers and vision setters.
- Charity Trustees.
- Company Directors.

Inspira Academy Trust is a charitable company and so Trustees are both charity Trustees (within the terms of section 177(1) of the Charities Act 2011) and company directors (within the terms of the Companies Act 2006).

The Companies Act 2006 applies to the Board of Trustees and imposes a general duty on them to:

- act within their powers.
- promote the success of the company.
- exercise independent judgement.
- exercise reasonable care, skill, and diligence.
- avoid conflicts of interest.
- not to accept benefits from third parties.
- declare interest in proposed transactions or arrangements.

Inspira Academy Trustees are ultimately responsible and accountable for the Trust. As their title suggests, Trustees are a pillar of Trust, helping guide the Executive Leadership team of an institution to academic excellence and success.

Trustees are bound by both charity and company law so the terms 'Trustees' and 'Directors' are often used interchangeably. The use of the term Trustee serves to highlight the overarching charitable purpose of the organisation, distinguishing it from other directorships that may be held in the private sector.

The Government sets very few requirements relating to the constitution of the board of Trustees of academy Trusts – articles give almost complete flexibility to design the constitution to ensure it has the necessary skills and capacity. In general, the Government believes that smaller boards are more likely to be cohesive and dynamic – though it also encourages diversity of skills, experiences, qualifications, characteristics, and perspectives. The need to establish committees or panels need not be an argument for larger boards. Committees or panels can include people who are not Trustees or can be shared with other organisations.

Trustees:

- must comply with laws that apply to companies and charities.
- ensure that the Academy Trust has a 'charitable purpose for the public benefit' – to advance education. This are set out in the 'Articles of Association'.
- ensure that the Academy Trust is an independent legal entity.
- act as the admissions authority as it sets and manages the process for admitting pupils to the schools.
- are the 'employer' of staff.
- are legally responsible for Health and Safety throughout the Academy Trust.
- Oversee the financial performance, including the submission of annual accounts and returns to Companies House and the Education Funding Agency (EFSA).
- set the strategic direction of the Trust and overseeing its implementation, keeping senior leadership accountable for maintaining a Trust's Vision and Aims.
- have all the general duties of a UK company director, including using independent judgement, avoiding conflict of interests, and protecting company property.

Trustees are responsible for the general control and management of the Trust, and in accordance with the provisions set out in the Articles of Association and its funding agreement are legally accountable for all statutory functions and for the performance of all the schools within the Trust; they do this by carrying out the core governance functions.

Trustees therefore have full accountability for the Trust and its activities. They can – as set out in this scheme – delegate responsibility to other committees and individuals, but they cannot delegate their accountability. The powers delegated in this scheme are given by the Trustees to committees and individuals and can be varied or removed at any time by the Trustees.

The Trustees are responsible for all financial matters and the CEO is the Accounting Officer. The CEO and CFO will agree a budget for each school with the headteacher on which the Local Academy Committee will be invited to comment. The Trustees will then confirm the budget for each school. Local Academy Committees will have the power to expend the funds in line with the approved budget. In doing so the Local Academy Committee will consider the objectives of the Trust; any conditions attached to specific grant funding; the agreed development priorities for the school; and financial sustainability.

Trustees must ensure that the Trust is compliant with its charitable objectives, but also with company and charity law.

The Board of Trustees will approve a written scheme of financial delegation and, should they choose to, delegate to board committees and Local Academy Committees, approve a written scheme of delegation and committee terms of reference.

The Trust creates information pathways between the Trust board, Committees, and the CEO and Chair of Trustees so that Committees can share with them any concerns (or celebrations) they may have.

THE EXECUTIVE TEAM

The Executive Team comprises the CEO, CFO and headteachers.

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER (CEO)

The Board of Trustees **will** appoint, in writing, a senior executive leader. In MATs it should be the Chief Executive or equivalent. The individual must be a fit and suitable person for the role.

The Trustees delegate the day-to-day management of the Trust to the CEO, line managing them in line with the Trust's appraisal and performance management policies.

The CEO has the delegated responsibility for the operation of the Trust including the performance of the Trust's academies (schools). The CEO reports to the Board of Trustees on strategic Trust performance. The CEO is the leader of education for the Trust.

The CEO leads the Executive Team (ET) and is accountable to the Board of Trustees for the performance of the ET. The ET contributes to key educational policy-making decisions, establishes collaborative projects, and offers and receives mutual support and challenge. The CEO professionally line manages the ET and holds them to account through effective performance management.

The annual performance management of the CEO is undertaken by a panel consisting of the Chair of Trustees, two Trustees and an External Consultant.

The CEO is also the Accounting Officer (AO) for the Trust, and as such has a range of legal responsibilities through ESFA's Accounting Officer (on behalf of the Secretary of State), to the DfE's Principal Accounting Officer for the discharge of his or her duties. It includes a personal responsibility for the Trust's financial resources. Accounting Officers must be able to assure Parliament, and the public, of high standards of probity in the management of public funds, particularly regularity, propriety, and value for money.

The Accounting Officer must have oversight of financial transactions, by:

- ensuring the academy Trust's property and assets are under the Trustees' control, and measures exist to prevent losses or misuse.
- ensuring bank accounts, financial systems and financial records are operated by more than one person.
- keeping full and accurate accounting records to support their annual accounts.

The AO must take personal responsibility (which must not be delegated) for assuring the Board of Trustees that there is compliance with the AFH and the Funding Agreement and must advise the Board in writing if action it is considering is incompatible with the articles, funding agreement or AFH. Where the board is minded to proceed, despite the AO's advice, the AO **must** consider the Board's reasons and if the AO still considers the action proposed by the Board is in breach of the articles, the funding agreement or AFH, the AO **must** notify ESFA's AO immediately in writing.

The AO must complete and sign an annual statement on regularity, propriety, and compliance each year and submit this to the ESFA with the Trust's audited accounts. This is a formal declaration by the Trust's AO that his personal responsibilities to Parliament for the resources under his control during the year have been met. The AO must also demonstrate how the Trust has secured value for money via the governance statement in the audited accounts. The CEO has the power to challenge decisions made by Local Academy Committees and may seek reconsideration of those decisions in the discharge of his or her legal duties.

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

The Board must appoint a Chief Financial Officer (CFO) to whom responsibility for the Trust's detailed financial procedures is delegated. The CFO should play both a technical and leadership role. The CFO should be employed by the Trust.

The CFO is responsible for the Trust's detailed financial procedures and may have additional leadership duties delegated to them by the CEO or Trust Board.

The CFO need not discharge all their duties personally. The Trust may employ additional staff or contractors with the relevant skills and knowledge at the appropriate time – managed by the CFO. The CFO and their finance staff must be appropriately qualified and/or experienced.

The CFO is professionally line managed by the CEO. The annual performance management of the CFO is undertaken by the CEO and a Trustee of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee.

HEAD TEACHERS

Each headteacher is responsible for the day-to-day management of their own school and has responsibilities delegated to them by the CEO. The headteacher is the lead professional in the school and reports to the CEO on matters which have been delegated to them. Headteachers are professionally line managed by the CEO. The CEO is responsible for ensuring each HT has a mid-year review and annual performance review.

Headteachers engage constructively with their Local Academy Committees. The annual performance management of the headteacher is undertaken by the CEO with the support of Chair of the Local Academy Committee and with the involvement of an external adviser appointed by the Board of Trustees.

Headteachers of individual schools will be line managed professionally by the CEO who will undertake the headteacher's annual performance review, as well as interim monitoring, and determine salary progression in the light of it. The CEO will ensure professional support and challenge on issues associated with standards and pupil performance.

Headteachers share information about how the trust is managing the school with the Local Academy Committee so that governors build an understanding about how the school operates and are enabled to monitor and scrutinise how key policies and improvement plans are working in practice.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

The Trustees are responsible for all financial matters and the CEO is the Accounting Officer. The CEO and CFO will agree a budget for each school with the headteacher on which the Local Academy Committee will be invited to comment. The Trustees will then confirm the budget for each school and report that to the ESFA. Headteachers will have the power to expend the funds in line with the approved budget. In doing so the Local Academy Committees will consider the objective of the Trust; any conditions attached to specific grant funding; the agreed development priorities for the school; and financial sustainability.

LOCAL ACADEMY COMMITTEES (FORMERLY LGBs)

Inspira Academy Trust believes it is important that each school has its own Local Academy Committee, with governors reflecting the community served by the school and focused on supporting the school's leaders in maintaining the ethos of the school and delivering high quality teaching, learning and outcomes for all children.

Each academy (school) will have a Local Academy Committee focused on the needs of the school and supporting and challenging the Headteacher particularly in relation to standards and ethos. The Trust starts with the presumption that a range of powers will be delegated to Local Academy Committees, who will have a degree of autonomy in how they operate.

The Trustees will monitor a range of indicators common to all schools which will be used to assess progress, in relation to:

- School performance (including in-year data, end of year data, performance tables, outcomes of monitoring activity and data dashboards).
- Recent Ofsted reports.
- Financial and administrative performance.
- Leadership and governance capacity and capability.
- Safeguarding and wellbeing concerns.
- Health and safety issues.
- Performance and impact of Local Academy Committee, for example, are Governors monitoring their schools against school improvement priorities?

Where Trustees have questions or concerns about progress in relation to any indicators, they will explore those with the Local Academy Committee and/or headteacher and, where necessary, agree a plan of action to address those questions or concerns. If concern remains Trustees reserve the right to:

- Remove and replace individual governors.
- Appoint additional governors.
- Vary the extent of delegation in a particular area.
- Remove delegated powers from the Local Academy Committee, who could remain in place as an advisory body only.

Trustees reserve the right to attend any Local Academy Committee meetings.

FINANCE, AUDIT AND RISK (FAR) COMMITTEE

Every Academy Trust must have a committee responsible for audit and risk – whether that is a dedicated committee or combined with another. This committee will have oversight of financial and non-financial controls and risks at each academy. It must also make sure that finance and funding information submitted to the DfE and ESFA by the Trust and individual academies is accurate and compliant with sections 3.8 and 3.12 to 3.14 of the Academy Trust Handbook 2022.

The purpose of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee is to:

- Advise the Trust Board on the adequacy of the Trust's internal control framework including financial and non-financial controls and risk management arrangements.
- Oversee and approve the trust's programme of internal scrutiny.
 - Internal scrutiny will be independent and objective, and so **not** performed by the accounting officer, CFO or other members of the senior leadership or finance team but performed by someone 'suitably qualified and experienced and able to draw on technical expertise as required'.
- Consider the results and quality of internal audit. Consider reports at each meeting from those carrying out the work.
- Produce an annual summary report to the ESFA for each year ended 31 August to help the committee consider actions and assess year-on-year progress. It should outline the:
 - Areas reviewed.
 - Key findings.
 - Recommendations.
 - Conclusions.
- Consider progress in addressing recommendations.
- Consider outputs from other assurance activities by third parties, including Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) financial management and governance reviews, funding audits and investigations.
- Have access to, and consider the quality of, the external auditor and those carrying out internal scrutiny.
- Ensure that risks are being addressed appropriately through internal scrutiny.

The Chair of Trustees will not be the Chair of the Finance, Audit and Risk committee but will be a member of the committee. Trust employees should not be on the audit and risk committee either. However, the Accounting Officer (AO) and Chief Financial Officer (CFO) will attend to provide information and be involved in discussions.

The Finance, Audit and Risk Committee Terms of Reference can be found [here](#).

CURRICULUM AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

The purpose of the Curriculum and Standards Committee is to:

- Support the Board of Trustees in fulfilling statutory duties relating to curriculum and standards.
- Support the Board of Trustees in understanding the unique context of each academy whilst ensuring a consistent approach to reporting.
- Support the Board of Trustees in understanding relevant data, including performance, progress, outcomes, behaviour, attendance, and other key performance indicators.
- Support the strategic role of the school leadership.
- Provide a framework for effective self-evaluation, monitoring, and evaluation.
- Support and challenge by linking the work of committees to key priorities in the Academy and Trust Development Plans.

Our Curriculum and Standards Committee will oversee monitoring and evaluation of:

- Pupil progress and achievement data.
- The progress of different pupil groups, such as pupils with special educational need and disabilities (SEND).
- The needs of groups of underachieving pupils.
- The use of the pupil premium and its impact on pupil progress.
- School performance data, such as Key Stage 2 results.
- The school's priorities for improvements in children's learning and outcomes.
- The school curriculum, including curriculum policies such as relationships and sex education (RSE).

The Curriculum and Standards Committee Terms of Reference can be found [here](#).

HEALTH & SAFETY (INCLUDING SAFEGUARDING) COMMITTEE

The purpose of the Health & Safety (including Safeguarding) Committee is to:

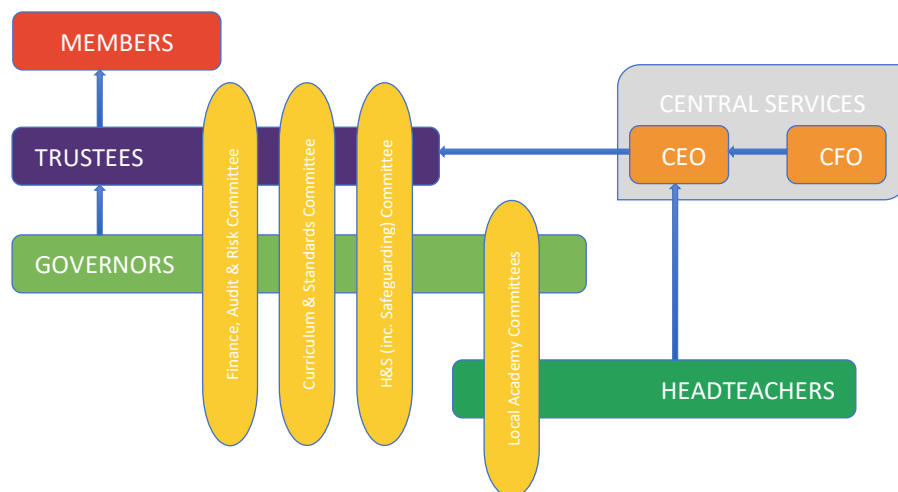
- Support the Board of Trustees in fulfilling statutory duties relating Health & Safety.
- Support the Board of Trustees in fulfilling statutory duties relating Safeguarding.
- Provide oversight and scrutiny of safeguarding arrangements within the Trust.
- Ensure the Trust has appropriate policies and procedures in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in our schools.
- Promote and maintain a safe and healthy working environment for children, staff, and visitors.
- Identifying potential workplace health and safety risks and developing strategies to mitigate them.
- Conduct safety audits and assessments to ensure compliance with relevant regulations and standards.
- Promote our commitment to creating a safe and healthy working environment, which can help to improve morale, and reduce accidents and injuries.

Our Health & Safety (including Safeguarding) Committee will oversee monitoring and evaluation of:

- Health & Safety measures and programs to ensure that they are effective and up to date.
- Safeguarding policies and procedures to ensure that they are effective and up to date.
- Equipment, procedures, or work environments to improve safety.
- Policies and procedures in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in our schools.

The Health & Safety (including Safeguarding) Committee Terms of Reference can be found [here](#).

HOW OUR OPERATIONAL AND GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES WORK TOGETHER



COMMUNICATION

Communication between all involved in governance is paramount to ensuring that each can effectively fulfil their responsibilities.

Members – have access to all Trust board papers and minutes of meetings. The Chair of the Trust Board will provide a quarterly summary report to Members identifying key issues – and will inform Members as soon as a potential Trustee vacancy is identified.

Trustees – have access to all Local Academy Committees papers and minutes. Trustees will consult Local Academy Committees on budget matters, on vision and values and on Trust wide policy matters. The Chair of the Trust Board and the CEO will meet informally with the chairs of each Local Academy Committees with a focus on the effectiveness of communication between Trust and schools and on resolving any questions raised by Local Academy Committees.

Local Academy Committees – will have access to minutes of Trustee meetings – other than any confidential matters (or a report after each meeting from the Chair/ CEO on Trustee discussions/ decisions). The Chair of Trustees will provide a termly update to Local Academy Committees on pertinent Trust matters. Local Academy Committees should expect feedback from Trustees on the issues raised in their minutes.

The flow of data and reporting mechanisms will be reflected in the Trust Yearly Meeting Planner.

SKILLS

Inspira Academy Trust is committed in ensuring its Members, Trustees, and Governors:

- Understand the role of non-executive leaders.
- Have the skills set out in the competency framework – or a commitment to develop them (with support and training to do so)
- Bring a diversity of perspectives.
- Are recruited through robust and transparent processes – where skills and commitment are made clear.

The competency framework identifies specific knowledge desirable at both Member and Trustee level - finance; SEN/ safeguarding/ health and safety; HR in education; data analysis – but on the basis that since there will be access to specialist advice the level of knowledge required is to know when that advice should be sought. Members and Trustees with specialist expertise are not required to act in place of advisers with that expertise – but would be well placed to identify when specific advice is required.

SUCCESSION PLANNING

The Trust understands that it is essential that there is a diverse mix of experienced and newer Governors and Trustees covering a wide range of areas of expertise.

Annual reviews of governor expertise contribute to the strategy for the recruitment, retention, development and succession planning of Governors and Trustees.

Recruitment uses a mixed approach of personal contacts, advertising, approaches to national and local organisations, including for example Academy Ambassadors.

The Trustees remain mindful of the importance of diversity and equality in Trustee and Governor appointments.

Appointments are conditional on a satisfactory enhanced DBS check.

Training for all Trustees and Governors is made available by the Trust to enable Trustees and Governors to carry out their role effectively.

All new Trustees and governors are systematically inducted and are mentored by a named more experienced colleague in their first year.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

All Members, Trustees, Trust staff, Governors and Academy Leaders will follow the guidance and instructions of the Academy Trust Handbook 2022 (specifically Related Party Transactions 5.35 through to 5.59).

REVIEW

This scheme will be reviewed by Trustees in consultation with Local Academy Committees and the Executive Team June 2024 and thereafter in June each year to come in effect on 1 September and run for the academic year. As noted in the section on principles of delegation it may be varied and amended by Trustees at any time.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX 1: SCHEDULE OF DELEGATION MATRIX

The Trust Board Delegation Matrix can be found [here](#).

APPENDIX 2: POLICIES

The schedule of policies can be found [here](#).