

Diocese of Truro
Diocesan Board of Education



Governance Handbook

Version 6 January 2026



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Overview

This handbook is primarily designed to provide a supportive guide to the Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) and Askel Veur (AV). We’re acutely aware that governors, in whatever role that is, are volunteers, sometimes lay people. To that end, we believe that they should be supported well to fulfil their roles.

Through this document, we outline our (Diocese of Truro) working procedures and give clarity regarding the expectations of those on these committees and also to those we partner with. This handbook seeks to provide both new and experienced colleagues with a clear overview of what good governance looks like against national and diocesan frames, standards and ways of working.

A key development in the way in which we work sees us embed the Programme for Church School Flourishing which is a vital element of our Strategic Commitments. Within this, it includes the role of the Leader for Church School Governance (LCSG). This role sees us partner directly with a trust-level colleague in each trust where Church Schools sit. Working in partnership with the Education Team, and subsequently the DBE, these colleagues promote, nurture and protect the governance (and wider work) of our Church Schools and the trusts they are part of. This handbook supports those LCSG colleagues in ensuring our expectations and understanding of good governance are lived out in their trusts.

Through this document, we hope also that it provides support to schools and trusts within the Diocese of Truro to ensure **clarity of processes, roles and responsibilities**. This one central document seeks to embed **open and collaborative working**.

Note that any updates since a previous version date are shown with **yellow highlighting**.

The Diocese of Truro Education Team

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Our Vision and Strategic Commitments

The Church of England’s Vision for Education - Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good

The vision for the Church of England is not simply for Church schools but, recognising the Church of England’s involvement in education over many centuries, seeks to promote educational excellence everywhere, for everyone.



A core part of our DBE strategic plan is to ensure that our deeply rooted Christian foundation is further strengthened in our Church schools and that a light is shone on and from them to all schools. It provides opportunity to share the threads, such as teaching and learning both in RE and across the curriculum, authentic Christian worship and the living out of ethos and values, with all schools. Our plan aims to ensure that in schools which are not rooted in an explicit Christian ethos, our vision for education can still be expressed and promoted as one of human flourishing that can inspire what all schools are and do.

The Vision, and the strategic commitments of our DBE embrace the spiritual, physical, intellectual, academic, emotional, moral and social development of children and young people and their communities. The vision, and our strategic plan, has four basic elements permeating through it:

- **Wisdom:** educating for wisdom, knowledge and skills
- **Hope:** educating for hope and aspiration
- **Community:** educating for community and living well together
- **Dignity:** educating for dignity and respect

Within our strategic plan there is a focus on partnerships and how, through these, we can **improve educational, societal and life affecting outcomes** for all children in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

Our strategic plan for the DBE reflects the overall strategy for the Truro Diocesan Board of Finance (TDBF). Core aims of the TDBF's strategic plan include working in partnership with the local and national church, promoting and maintaining sound financial structures, supporting and promoting the work of the programme for change and renewal and promoting the work of the DBE - all of which can be seen as threads through this plan.

The Church of England's Vision for Education makes clear its commitment to the common good of the whole human community and its environment, whether national, regional or local. It is hospitable to diversity, respects freedom of religion and belief, and encourages others to contribute from the depths of their own traditions and understandings. It invites collaboration, alliances, negotiation of differences, and the forming of new settlements in order to serve the flourishing of a healthily plural society and democracy, together with a healthily plural educational system. This underpins our strategic commitments for our Diocesan Board of Education and shapes how we work in a **deeply Christian manner, serving the common good** through meaningful partnerships.

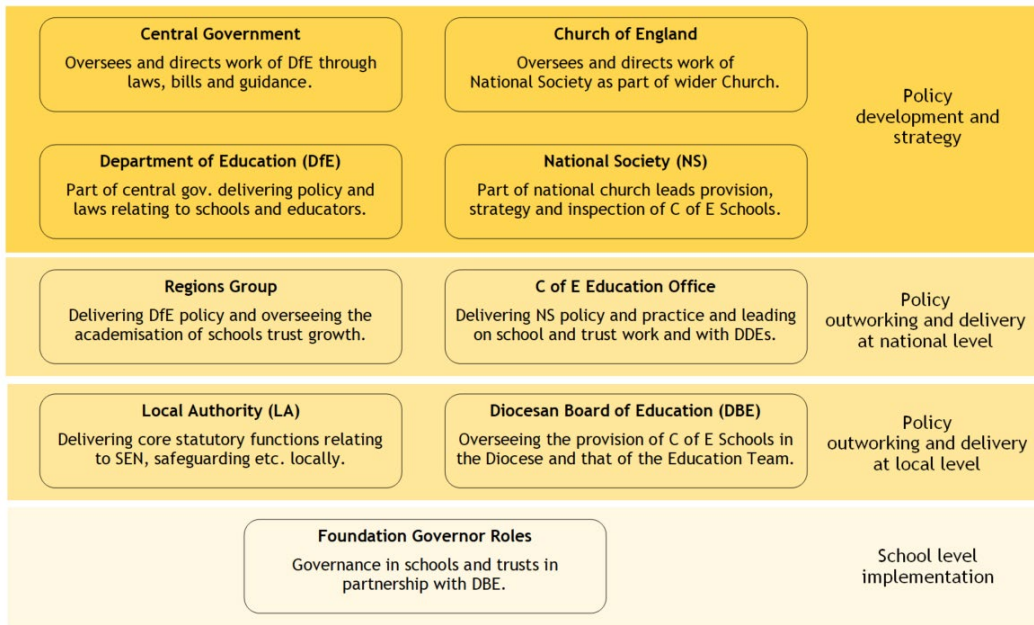
OUR AIM IS TO BE A SIGNIFICANT PARTNER IN IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR ALL CHILDREN IN CORNWALL AND THE ISLES OF SCILLY.

To this end, not only do we work directly with the 43 Church Schools in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly and their associated Trusts and communities. We also partner with professional and statutory partners and members of congregations who are also school staff and governors and through a variety of partnerships to offer professional development, curriculum support, governance development and school improvement. We are actively involved with other Dioceses, organisations and many more schools and academies across and beyond the Duchy.

The Education Ecosystem

You'll see from the diagram below that whichever role you are using this handbook for sees you as an important part of the whole ecosystem of diocesan, school and MAT governance.





Articles of Association - what this means in our context

These are documents that stipulate the charitable purpose and governance structure of an academy trust. They set out the condition of the funding agreements of the trust with the Secretary of State. The DfE provide model articles in a framework (ensuring consistency) and enabling academy trusts to govern in transparent and accountable ways that fulfil the trust's charitable purpose. The articles set out the governance procedures for the trust including meeting, appointment and voting mechanisms.

The Articles are in essence the set of rules that the charity and education establishment needs to abide by in order to be compliant. The governance professional within each trust/school should be able to help you answer any questions that you have in regards to the articles.

The DBE Measure

What is the DBE measure?

It is the primary legislation that formalises the delivery partnership between the Church of England (through 41 diocese) and the State in the delivery of non-selective primary and secondary school provision for the common good of those of all faiths and none. It reflects over 200 years of formal collaboration between the state and the church. To enact the Measure, every diocese has a statutory requirement to have a *Diocesan Board of Education (DBE)* who also appoint a *Diocesan Director of Education (DDE)*. Constitutionally, the operational function of this body is also set out in the *DBE Measure* (last updated in 2021). The appointment of a DDE is a statutory requirement for all diocese, and most DDE's have an education team.

It details how DBEs, through the measure, protect the vision, how dioceses are cemented in the national education system and how dioceses retain protective oversight-governance.

Fundamentally, it sets out in law how DBEs promote, nurture and protect church school education in the diocese.

Why do we have a DBE measure?

To protect the commitments and promises made by those who founded our schools and thus who governs and runs them. Most Church schools were founded in the early and middle years of the 19th century at a time when schooling was only available to those wealthy enough to pay. This Christian-spirited drive to provide universally available education for the poor, meant that by the time of the national census of 1851, the Church had established 17,000 schools. The initial establishment of formal state provision for public education through the 1870 Education Act could not have happened without the pre-existence of this funded and expanding church-school system.



In the absence of any formal apparatus for state schooling, most were created using the best time-protected legal instruments of the time; Trust Deeds with endowments funded by private benefactors and public subscription.

The DBE Measure seeks to protect the vision, commitment and inter-generational promise of these generous antecedents, and that includes the requirements set out in the deeds, trusts and educational foundations they set up and which persist to this day.

Functions within the measure

Within the measure, and subsequently within the articles, it is outlined the way in which schools and trust partner with the DBE. The work of the DBE with the school and trust will fall within the following categories of scope:

Advice | Consent | Consultation | Directions | Engagement
Information | Safeguarding

What does this mean for how we work?

Below are some key areas which, through the functions above, the DBE retain oversight-governance of the work of our schools through communication, feedback, information sharing and transparency between the DBE and governance within schools and trusts where our schools sit and partner with.

Admissions | Buildings Work / change of use / redevelopment / alterations | Statutory Returns - buildings | Recruiting Senior Leaders | Governance - appointing / change of structures / advice | Mergers / Acquisitions / Transfers | Financial concerns / grant applications

Powerful Partnerships - Trusts, DBE and Education Team working together

What might the DBE ask of schools and trusts?

The DBE, via the DDE, Askel Veur or wider education team, might ask trusts about their self-evaluation, skills audits and what review has been undertaken in a given year.

Self-evaluation can take place in a number of ways, the NGA and CST both provide templates for this. A board may wish to also take a set of minutes from 12-18 months ago and review the questions asked - are they challenge or clarification? What does that tell you about your board? Is the challenge on your board welcomed and appropriate? Where can we find the evidence for the answers received? Is the challenge on your board actually related to a lack of clear meeting focus and/or preparation?

A board with a clear mission and purpose whose work is embedded in school or academy improvements plans will do better. Having ownership of the challenges facing the school community as well as confidence in asking challenging questions is the sign of an effective board.

DBE will also be keen to look at all aspects of SIAMS, land and buildings work, future planning for the trust e.g growth/merger and also any admissions plans.

Askel Veur Foundation and Corporate Members

The DBE, through Askel Veur Corporate Members, is represented in each of the trusts in which there are Church Schools. Also, where we have been approached to do so, members of Askel Veur are present on these boards also.

Members are either foundation members (members of the AV board) or 'associate' meaning these are others who have been asked by Askel Veur, based on their experience and roles, to represent the board in a particular trust.

When attending meetings, members complete a report which is then provided to Askel Veur. The report supports members in ensuring that, through the meeting, they are enabled to fulfil their role and in turn supports the trust in fulfilling their obligations of the DBE Measure. A copy of this form can be found in Appendix 1 of this document.

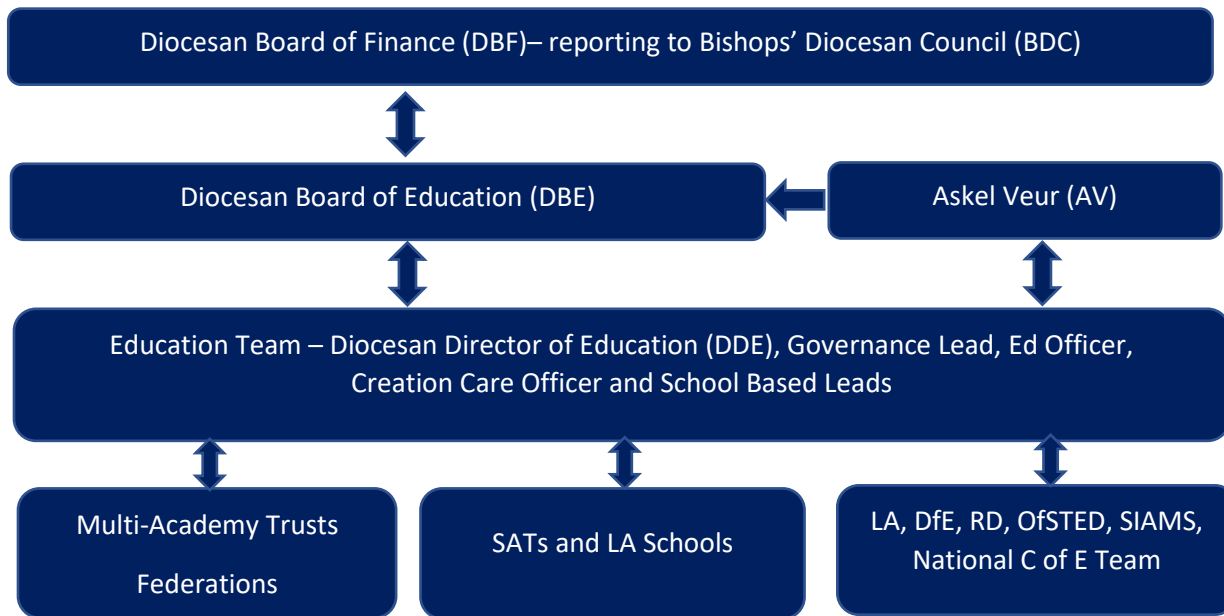
Strong Trusts - how we seek reassurances and make judgements



The DBE seeks reassurances that our schools sit within trusts that serve them and their communities well. We do this by gathering information about trusts against different metrics. One of these is the [DfE Trust Quality Descriptors](#). These have supported the DBE in creating our own definition of these which is part of our ‘snapshot tool’. Here, we hold all of the information we gather about our trusts: outcomes in statutory testing, SIAMS and OfSTED outcomes, Education Team feedback from visits and details gathered in member reports and DDE visits and meetings. A key part of this is the ‘strong trusts’ judgements we have formulated which can be found in Appendix 2. These help us to make judgement and shape our questioning and challenge.

The Structure of Governance within the Diocese of Truro

The diagram below shows the structure of governance within our diocese with arrows showing information flow between boards and committees.



The DBE and Askel Veur - structure, portfolios and reporting

The table on the following shows the structure of the DBE from November 2024 which sees the introduction of ‘**portfolio holders**’ where each member of the DBE, using their skill, experience and interest, will hold a portfolio relating to our work. The portfolios have been developed to ensure that the functions of the **DBE Measure** (noted in green) are fulfilled and focused on as well as ensuring clearer links to the wider work and structure of the Diocese of Truro.

The portfolios are:

- **Quality of Education** - focusing on **standards, inspection, outcomes, Religious Education** and small schools;
- **Governance and Compliance** - with a focus on the delivery of the **DBE Measure, governance**, admissions and stakeholders;
- **Inclusion** - attendance, EDI, SEND and disadvantaged pupils;
- **Finance, Asset and Risk** - **land and buildings**, risk management, financial oversight and budget planning;
- **Mission** - wider diocesan links, **collective worship**, church and parish links, Creation Care, chaplaincy and environment;
- **Partnerships** - links with professional bodies, institutions and organisations;
- **Safeguarding**.

Askel Veur, the academies arm of the DBE, focuses its work on the academisation of schools and the growth of trusts and represents the DBE through its Corporate Members in each MAT.



Each AV trustee/DBE attendee will have a DBS undertaken by the Diocese safeguarding team. If there is a current portable DBS in place, this will be checked and noted. All results are shared with the education team and stored on the Diocese system.

Each portfolio holder has specific areas that they will focus on. Some of the questions portfolio holders might ask, holding the Education Team to account and ensuring fulfilment of the DBE role could be (with examples and not an exhaustive list):

Quality of Education

- How do we track and measure outcomes in our Church Schools?
- How do standards in C of E schools compare to non-C of E schools across the LA, nationally or within trusts?
- What do we know about standards across the trusts in which our schools sit?
- Are there patterns / specific things noted in inspection outcomes (OfSTED and SIAMS)?
- What is the provision of RE in our schools and those we partner with? Who provides training? Who leads? How is the quality of RE monitored and evaluated?
- Do school improvement plans show trends or patterns?

Governance and Compliance

- Are there areas of strength / need in governance in particular schools or trusts?
- How is the Governance Officer from the Education Team supporting this work?
- What do corporate member reports tell us?
- What are the growth plans of trusts and how are we supporting / speaking into this?
- What do admission numbers look like this year / compared with last / forecasted? How do we track this?
- Can we be assured that trusts and schools are compliant?

Inclusion

- What do levels of attendance look like in our schools and trusts? How do we know this data is up to date? How do we gather this?
- What do we know of school/trust work surrounding EDI and how are we supporting this work?
- How are we tracking SEND and disadvantaged pupil outcomes?
- Are there areas of best practice / need that we can support / signpost?
- Where are schools and trusts getting training / being supported / engaging with others?

Finance, Asset and Risk

- Are planned budgets being maintained for the Education Team?
- What is the key area of focus now / anticipated?
- What are the main risks facing the DBE? How is this recorded in the Risk Register? What are the new risks? What risks have increased/decreased?
- Are there significant building plans in any of our schools? What is our involvement and how do we ensure that this is compliant?
- How are we supporting schools and trusts in this area of their work?
- Are we reassured that schools are compliant?

Mission

- How are we supporting our wider diocesan priorities as a DBE?
- In what ways are we enabling those in our schools to meet Christ and see the Kingdom of God?
- How are we strengthening links between schools, home and church?
- How are we growing a younger, more diverse church?
- How are we supporting the worshipping lives of schools?

Partnerships

- What partnerships do we have and what is the impact of these (mutually)?



- How do we support others in understanding our work?
- How, through our partners do we make the work and mission of the DBE clear?
- Are there partnerships we do not yet have?

Safeguarding

- How are we assured of the safeguarding procedures in place in our schools?
- Are we assured that our work reflects the aims and requirements of the Diocesan Safeguarding Team and House of Bishops Guidance?
- How can we support the work of the diocese more widely?
- What concerns / patterns are there in our schools and trusts?
- What training is in place?

Each year we hold a **Service of Commissioning** for the leaders and governors at all levels in our schools. This service, held in Truro Cathedral and led by the Bishop, celebrates the work of those in our schools, thanks them for their commitment and welcomes new members of our school communities into this missional work of the Diocese as a significant partner.

Askel Veur - its Charitable Objects

Askel Veur is a charity and its objects can be found in the articles:

The Charity's objects (the "Objects") are to advance for the public benefit education in the Diocese of Truro or elsewhere, in particular but not exclusively, by:

- 2.1.1 promoting the efficiency and effectiveness of Educational Institutions and the efficient and effective application of resources for such purposes including by promoting and disseminating models of good practice and by the delivery of support services generally to such institutions;
- 2.1.2 advancing the education of people who work or volunteer in or govern, Educational Institutions in order to assist those persons to deliver a high quality education to the pupils and to communities served by those institutions;
- 2.1.3 establishing and maintaining Academies (primarily but not exclusively Church of England Academies) under the direction of the Diocesan Board of Education (fostering the Christian ethos and practice of educational institutions).

Schedule of Meetings for DBE and Askel Veur

The structure and focus of meetings for both the DBE and Askel Veur are mapped out below. Askel Veur, as required, meet as a committee of the DBE (extraordinarily) to carry out due diligence and give consent regarding academisation of schools and the joining and merging of trusts. AV will also meet each year for its AGM and in the summer to prepare a report to the DBE on their work.

Academic Year										
Autumn Term				Spring Term			Summer Term			
Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
AV		DBE			DBE, AV AGM			DBE		DBE

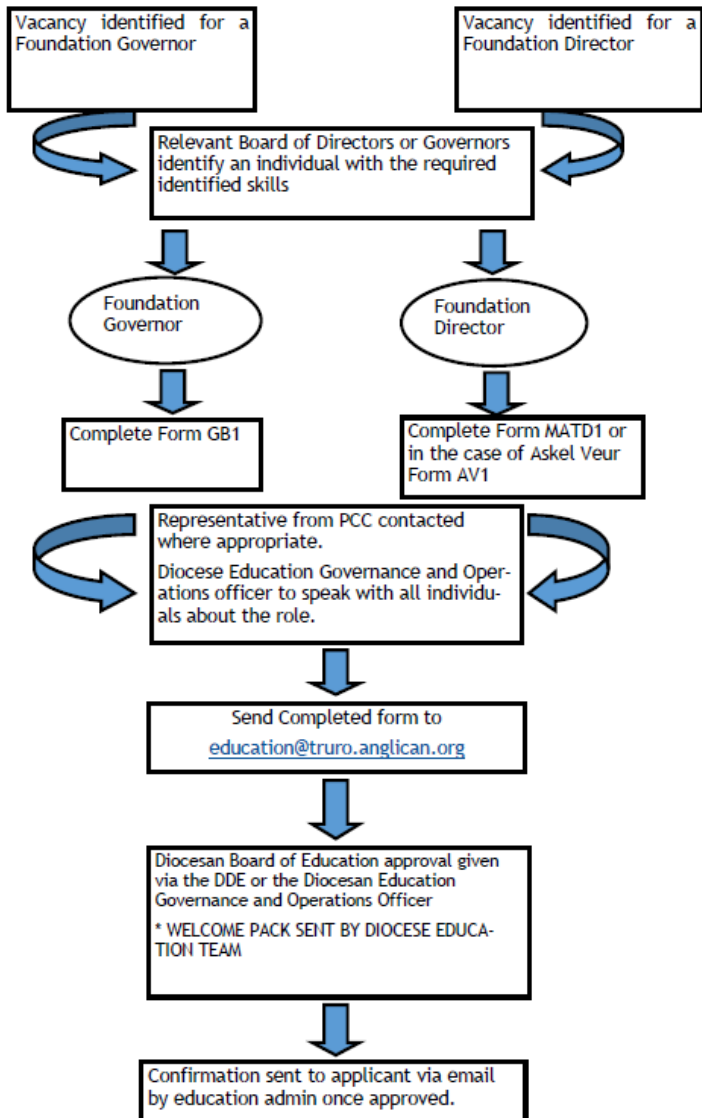


Truro Diocesan Board of Education							
Portfolio	Quality of Education	Governance & Compliance	Inclusion	Finance, Asset & Risk	Mission	Partnerships	Safeguarding
Core Areas of Governance within portfolio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcomes in Schools OfSTED and SIAMS RE Provision Small Schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foundation Governance Delivery of DBE Measure Corporate Member responsibilities Academisation and trust transfer/mergers Admissions Stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance EDI SEND and Disadvantage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land and Buildings Risk Register Financial Oversight and Budget Planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mission links with wider diocesan teams Church & Parish links Creation Care Diocesan Environment Board Chaplaincy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CYP links SACRE Local Authority CEP SLN AADE CAPH / CASH CACE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safeguarding Links with Diocesan Safeguarding Team House of Bishops
DBE Measure element of portfolio	Standards in C of E Schools	Foundation Governance	Standards in C of E Schools	Land and Buildings	Wider mission of the diocese and C of E Building a younger and more diverse church	Promotion of the work of DBE	Safeguarding
Accounting and Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verbal updates to DBE on key decisions as portfolio holder DDE Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verbal updates to DBE on key decisions as portfolio holder Reporting re. academisation through report template and academisation and MAT docs DDE Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verbal updates to DBE on key decisions as portfolio holder DDE Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verbal updates to DBE on key decisions as portfolio holder Reports to FAR (through DDE) on behalf of DBE DDE Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verbal updates to DBE on key decisions as portfolio holder DDE Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verbal updates to DBE on key decisions as portfolio holder DDE Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verbal updates to DBE on key decisions as portfolio holder Reports to DST DDE Report

Askel Veur	
Core Areas of Governance	Academies Arm of the DBE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academisation of C of E Schools Academies and SAATs joining Trusts Trust merger, transfer, closure etc
Accounting and Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reports to DBE Corporate member functions
Trustees & Members	Committee formed by members of DBE and acting as a sub-committee as required



Appointment process for Foundation Directors and Foundation Governors



Appointing Foundation Trustees and Governors

Within this document, we refer to these roles as Trustees and Governors and it is important to be clear that, in accordance with company law, the foundation trustees of a multi-academy trust (MAT) also serve as its directors. This dual role means that while they are responsible for the strategic oversight and governance of the trust, they also bear the legal responsibilities and duties of company directors. This includes ensuring compliance with statutory requirements, safeguarding the trust's assets, and acting in the best interests of the trust and its stakeholders. Understanding this dual capacity is crucial for effective governance and the successful operation of the multi-academy trust.

Foundation directors and governors have a unique role in ensuring that the Christian Distinctiveness of the local school is integrated and lived out at all levels of the school, from pupils to governors and trust boards. Being a foundation director or governor is a vital Christian ministry. It involves time, energy and a willingness to become involved in the life of the school on a regular basis. Foundation governors and directors are included on church school governing boards specifically in order to maintain and develop the Christian foundation of the school. Foundation directors and governors should therefore have a particular concern for the distinctive Christian vision of the school, religious education and collective worship. They should also seek to maintain and develop the links with the local church.

A director or governor may not take part in any discussion or vote if there is a pecuniary interest in the outcome, or if there are circumstances which raise reasonable doubts about their ability to be impartial.

Consideration will be given to local circumstances when appointing foundation directors and governors.

The person appointed should be sympathetic to the interest, needs and aspiration of children and sensitive to the trust which parents place in the integrity of staff and governors. If no foundation governors can be found locally then, in discussion with the chair of governors/trust board, foundation governors and directors can be sought from wider afield.

The Board of Education will not support: -

- Applications from the retiring/retired headteacher/deputy headteachers for the same school. This includes assistant heads to a Foundation Governor from the school they have just retired from (The board, however, would encourage them to be a governor elsewhere and will assist in finding a suitable school).
- Application from an individual that is related to someone who is currently serving on the governing body (The board, however, would encourage them to be a governor elsewhere and will assist in finding a suitable school).
- Any member of the school staff who works at the school in any paid capacity (The board, however, would encourage them to be a governor elsewhere and will assist in finding a suitable school).
- The Incumbent or Parish Priest being the Chair of Governors, this is so they can provide pastoral support should there ever be a reason it is required and still be part of the governing body.



Headteachers and Chairs of Governors are encouraged to recruit Foundation Directors and Governors that have the skills needed to complement the needs of the governing body/board. The National Governance Association produces a skills audit which should be completed regularly (or an equivalent) by all governors and directors to aid succession planning and appointments.

The Board of Education supports a wide diversity across all its governing bodies in order to reflect the society in which pupils will become adults. It is also possible for a director or governor to serve up to 3 terms of office, at this point the school or trust would need to contact the education governance lead to have a conversation about re-appointment possibilities.

In the Diocese of Truro we will only collect information it needs to decide on a nomination, this is in line with our GDPR policy. All schools and trusts undertake the recruitment process and necessary checks in line with best practice. The nomination or re-appointment forms are kept on our servers to complete. These intentionally require less data than in previous years due to the mature MAT landscape we work in, the MAT/SAT already holds the required data and we only need a small amount to keep in contact with foundation representatives.

When looking to appoint Foundation Governors and Directors, the Diocese of Truro are looking for particular skills and may ask questions around these areas when presented with nominations:

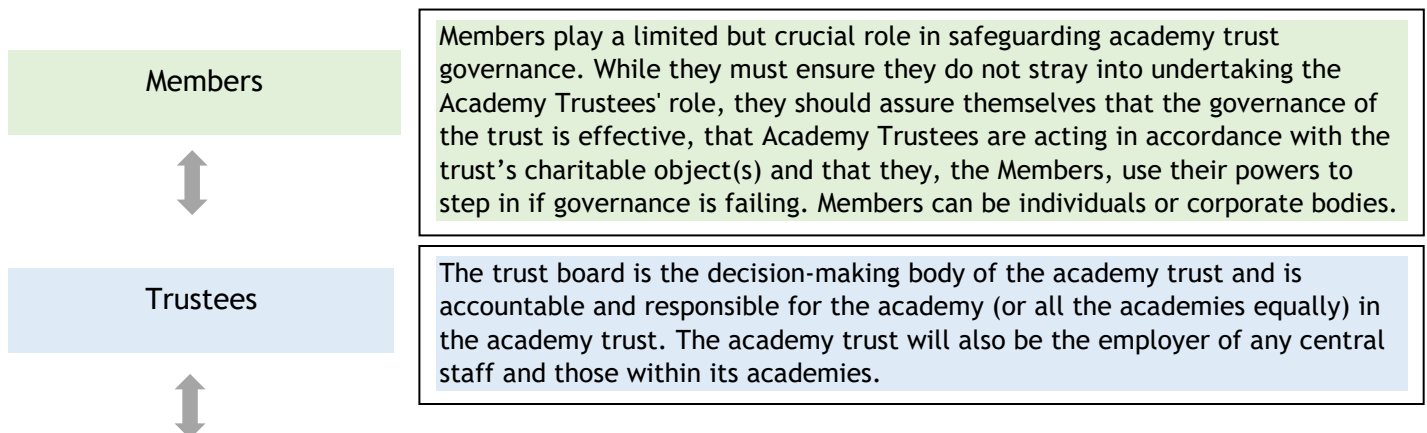
- A commitment to the education and personal development of children.
- A commitment to support the church foundation of the school/academy/multi academy trust/Askel Veur
- A commitment to give time to the school/academy in terms of attendance at meetings, preparation for meetings, visiting the school and attendance at training
- Good interpersonal skills
- The ability to work as part of a team
- The ability to plan carefully and manage time
- The confidence to ask challenging questions and hold professionals to account

Conflicts of Interest

Within the recruitment process pecuniary interests must be sought from applicants and also, through the structure of meetings, invitation to provide updated information. Ensuring that the Education Governance Lead is informed of recruitment plans adds additional safeguards to this part of the recruitment process.

Roles within a Multi Academy Trust (MAT)

The graphic below gives a quick overview of general structure and roles. Within the document, colour-coding using the three colours below are used to help you to navigate these sections and find information and support for you in your role(s).



Local School Governors

Trustees decide what, if any, governance functions they delegate to local governors. Local governors are a full and formal part of trust governance and can support effective operation of the trust and its policies, provide support and challenge at school level, bring issues and concerns to the attention of trustees and be a valuable link to staff and communities.

Structuring Meetings - what to expect in a meeting and its function

This section seeks to provide an overview of what is likely to be in each meeting. It's important to be familiar with the individual arrangements in the trust you are supporting. The details in this section show how, at each level, the work of each group support, inform and reassure the work of another.

Members Meetings

Members generally meet at least twice a year with an AGM being held annually as one of the meetings. The members' meeting is an 'eyes-on, hands-off' where, through having the Chair of Trustees, other trustees and some Executive Team members, the group is updated on the work of the board and the impact of their strategy.

The accountability for decisions relating to areas such as school improvement, local governance and financial performance sits with the trustees, not members. Members should therefore not be meeting to make strategic decisions and plans about these areas.

Through an AGM the members receive information and discharge their responsibilities. AGMs also secure public accountability. AGMs should take place every calendar year and within 15 months of the previous AGM.

The AGM is organised by the trustees. Within the AGM these core responsibilities are discharged and fall into particular scopes as noted in **green** below.

- The audited accounts and annual report are formally **received**.
- An overview of the performance of the Trust is **received** as well as its future plans and these are **discussed**.
- Governance review report is **received** and **discussed**.
- Appointment or reappointment of auditors is **agreed**.
- An overview of stakeholder feedback is **received** and **discussed**.
- Where required, appointments and resignations of trustees and members is **noted**.
- Any other resolutions are **passed** as required.

It's important to note that the points above can, and should be, discussed adding further clarity or sharing points that trustees might consider. Members must avoid becoming operational - the meeting and its contents are to reassure the members of the impact against the strategy (which is shaped and agreed by trustees).

Trustees Meetings

Trustees generally meet more often (normally termly). These exist to enable the trustees to fulfil the three core functions of:

- Ensuring clarity of the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the trust and its schools
- Holding the Executive Leaders to account for the performance of the trust and its schools and the efficient performance management of staff
- Overseeing the financial performance of the schools and making sure that money is well spent.

In addition to these, trustees should have regard for the work-life balance of leaders.

Through the trustee meeting(s), the board should be enabled to be the trust's key strategic decision making mechanism. As a board, decisions to delegate responsibilities to executive leaders are decided and, in accordance



with the scheme of delegation, may delegate some work to committees (see Committees - an overview of their role). The trust board remain accountable and responsible for all decisions made.

In Trusts where there are church schools, we would expect due regard for the religious character of the schools and how the trust is working to support, develop and champion this.

Within the meetings, trustees should consider how, through each meeting and the actions taken within the meeting support them in subsequently reassuring members and supporting them in their roles.

Local School Governors' Meetings

These school-level boards can be referred to in different ways in different trusts: Local Governing Boards/Bodies, Local Advisory Boards or Academy Councils etc. Whatever the name, they provide assurances to trustees of the work of individual schools. Within schemes of delegation, some school-level boards have delegated work but the trustees remain ultimately accountable and responsible.

For example, the trustees will approve the trust safeguarding policy and might then delegate to school-level boards the role of seeking the reassurance of local school leaders in that this is carried out. Governors will receive information at the meeting and pose questions and challenge which, on behalf of the trustees, will reassure this aspect of the trustees responsibilities.

Each trust will arrange its local-level meetings in line with their own scheme of delegation. Within the meetings, local-level governors should consider how, through each meeting and the actions taken within the meeting support them in subsequently reassuring trustees and supporting them in their roles.

Committees - an overview of their role (where they exist)

It's important to note that not all trusts will have all of these committees or necessarily use these names. This section is designed to provide support with understanding the function of each committee within the wider governance structure.

Audit and Risk

Through the Academies Financial Handbook (from 1 September 2020) academy trusts must establish an audit and risk committee. Academy trusts with an annual income over £50 million must have a dedicated audit and risk committee. Smaller trusts must either have a dedicated audit committee or combine the function with another committee. Some of the key documents that trusts will refer to are: Academy Trust's Scheme of Delegation and Academies Financial Handbook.

Finance

Academy trusts should have a finance committee to which the trust board delegates financial scrutiny and oversight. Some of the key documents that trusts will refer to are: Academy Trust's Scheme of Delegation and Academies Financial Handbook.

Standards

You're not required to have a standards committee, whether you're in a maintained school or an academy. While some boards have a standalone committee for standards, others may combine it with curriculum, or teaching and learning. A trust's terms of reference will be specific to their setting.

It's up to your board to determine what will be delegated to the standards committee.

Ethos

Their responsibilities include, but are not limited to, overseeing the academy trust's maintenance of the religious character of the academy trust, the culture, the quality of religious education and collective worship. For academies with a religious character, the relevant diocese or religious body exercises general oversight and has expectations of the schools/trust, it also provides support and training in regards to the ethos committee. This would include appropriate and regular feedback to trust boards.



Questioning - through questioning we seek reassurance and hold to account

Questioning as a member

Members need to be assured that the trust board is carrying out its role and responsibilities effectively. If they carry out multiple member roles then understanding individual trusts is essential when asking questions.

Suggested questions for members to ask	Comments and observations
School context	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the trust board reflect the ethos and values of the trust? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does the trust board scrutinise the distinct Christian nature of its schools? Is there a committee or network group that triangulates the information? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How are the church schools in your trust further enhancing the life of the community schools? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the trust board effectively fulfilling its three core governance functions? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there a clear vision for the trust and is progress being made against the strategic aims being pursued to realise this vision? Or do you know the review cycle for this area? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are senior leaders being held to account for the performance of the trust? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If there are underperforming schools in the trust, where is the impact of the improvement strategy showing itself best? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is financial oversight sound? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well does the trust board know the school(s) in the trust and how are the needs of the school(s) being met? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How engaged are stakeholders and is this reflected in the reputation of the trust? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has the trust board reviewed its own performance and have members received a copy? Was it internal or external and what does the self-evaluation tell us? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are the right people around the table at all levels of governance and are there any skills gaps? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there evidence to show that the charitable objectives of the trust are being met and that the governance of the trust is effective? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What key developments or challenges are the trust facing up till the next meeting? 	

Questioning as a trustee

Trustees should be inducted into the trust appropriately so that they understand the context and work that trustees need to undertake.

Suggested questions for trustees to ask	Comments and observations
School context	



How can we demonstrate that the trust's charitable object is being met?	
How can we demonstrate that the structure of the trust from the board downwards leads to improved progress and outcomes for pupils across the trust?	
How do we hold the headteacher/chief executive officer to account for the performance of the school/each school within the trust?	
How do we monitor standards in the school/each of the schools? How do we know this is effective?	
How do we ensure statutory compliance in all matters? e.g. Health and Safety, GDPR, employment law etc	
How do our admission numbers compare to the published admission number (PAN)? What's the long-term forecast?	
Are there any specific year groups for which the school is under its PAN? If so, are there any specific reasons for this and what is being done to address any issues?	
How do we make sure that appropriate financial oversight is being undertaken and that the school(s) in the trust have sufficient resources to remain solvent? Is there probity and value for money?	
What are the key risks to the success of the trust, and how do we monitor the likelihood and impact of those risks? How do we make sure significant risks are mitigated?	
How do we keep on top of developments in the education sector, to make sure we're appropriately prepared for changes that may impact the trust?	
How do we make sure our board has the right skills to discharge its responsibilities?	
How does the trust and its schools engage with stakeholders and how do we know it is effective? When changes are required how do we know these have happened and things have changed?	
How is the trust and its schools understanding of safeguarding, the roles and responsibilities?	
Is the trust monitoring its policies, does it have a schedule and does this meet the needs of the trust and the work it has to undertake? Is there a clear process for concerns to be registered and acted upon?	
How do you know the trust understands and embraces its values, ethics and culture?	
Is the trust communicating effectively with all levels of the trust, its schools and governance? How do you know that this is having the impact required and what evidence is there that stakeholders are happy?	
Is there suitable induction for volunteers and staff, is there exit processes embedded to ensure views are recorded, reported and acted upon when necessary?	



Are trustees confident that the trust is meeting all its legal requirements, takes into account the statutory guidance including on conflicts of interest, and related party transactions?	
Have trustees agreed with the executive leader a limited number of measurable strategic aims which need to be met in order for the trust to achieve its vision; these aims also drive the boards business?	
Is there clear and effective guidance and support with the academy committees which is effective, enabling academy committees to play a meaningful role in governance of the trust?	

Questioning as a local school governor

For the core functions of governance to be carried out effectively, governors need a sound understanding of the school and its context. It is important for governors to have the opportunity to gain this understanding early in their role to enable them to carry out their strategic duties and to inform any monitoring activities that the governing board have identified and planned.

Governors should ensure that they undertake any visit to the school in line with the school's procedures, scheme of delegation or policy for governor visits.

Suggested questions for governors to ask	Comments and observations
School context	
How many pupils are currently on roll? What is the impact of this on finance, quality of provision and sustainability etc?	
What are the current strengths of the school? How is this evaluated and impacting on the wider trust/school?	
What are the current priority areas for development in the school? Are these been identified in the current version of the school development plan (SDP)? Are these the same priorities? Has there been progress towards these?	
Has the school completed a recent self-evaluation exercise to inform the current school development plan priorities? How was the governing board involved in this process?	
What is the impact of governor monitoring on our priority areas?	
What is the school's current Ofsted judgement? What actions have been planned in response to this judgement?	
What is the school's current SIAMS judgement? What actions have been planned in response to this judgement? (Church Schools only)	
Does the school provide any wraparound care for pupils?	
Staffing and personnel	
How many members of staff are there in school? What is the breakdown of teachers, TAs, support staff? How does staffing impact on budget? How does staffing levels impact on pupil outcomes?	



What is the school's current leadership structure? What is the benchmarking of this against other similar schools? How can we show impact of the work of our leadership team?	
Who is the designated safeguarding lead (DSL)? Does this person have the capacity to fulfil their role? How are they supported/trained? Are they provided with supervision?	
How is the work-life balance of school staff supported?	
Pupils	
How is pupil progress and attainment tracked and monitored?	
How many pupils are there currently on roll who have SEND? What is this number as a percentage of the whole-school?	
What is the spread of pupils with SEND across the school? Are numbers higher in specific year groups?	
How do number of pupils with SEND compare to national/local/MAT averages?	
What specific provision is in place to support pupils with SEND? What impact can be shown for the provision in place?	
Are there specific gaps in the attainment of pupils with SEND and pupils without SEND?	
Are any identified gaps in attainment specific to certain year groups or is this a whole-school issue?	
How many pupils are there currently on roll who are eligible for pupil premium funding? What is this number as a percentage of the whole-school?	
What impact can be seen from the school's PPG strategy?	
How do numbers of disadvantaged pupils compare to national averages?	
Have any generic barriers to learning been identified for disadvantaged pupils?	
Are there significant gaps in attainment between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils? Are there any identified gaps specific to certain year groups or is this a whole-school issue?	
Are there any other vulnerable groups of pupils in the school, e.g. Looked After Children, or pupils with English as an Additional Language?	
What specific provision is in place to support these vulnerable pupils? What is the impact of this?	
What pastoral provision is in place for pupils? What is the impact of this?	



Finance and policy management (SAT/LA Maintained School Governing Body's only)	
What is the school's current financial position?	
What is the school's predicted three-year budget forecast?	
What are the key factors acting on the school's budget?	
What is the school's and governing board's policy management process?	
Governance	
How does the local governing board engage with MAT central team and the Board of Trustees? (MATs/SATs) How does the governing body engage with the senior leadership team	
How does the local governing board ensure all governors understand and adhere to its responsibilities as set out in the MAT/SAT scheme of delegation?	
How does the governing board ensure the school's Christian distinctiveness and vision are maintained? (Church Schools in MATs/SATs)	
How does the local governing board ensure the school's vision reflects the Church of England's vision for education? (Church Schools in MATs/SATs)	
What committee structure does the governing board have in place?	
What are the current strengths of the governing board?	
What are the development priorities for the governing board?	
How does the governing board evaluate its own performance?	
What are the governing board's monitoring priorities for the year ahead?	
How are governors' monitoring priorities organised?	
What training and CPD opportunities are available to governors?	

Schools or Trusts requiring support - our Support Strategy

In line with the Church of England Education Office national Vision for Education and our own Diocesan Board of Education vision, our aim is to be a significant partner in improving outcomes for children and young people. Through all of our work, we are committed to this and when this is something that is at risk of being achieved due to issues or concerns emerging, the strong relationships between DBE and trust partners ensure a system-led response.

It follows that, when trusts which include Church of England schools are identified as causing needing support, we have a responsibility to walk alongside the trustees to help them to prevent crisis and support them in providing for our church schools a secure system of school improvement within the shortest timeframe possible.



The 5 principles which underpin the Trust Support Strategy recognise that:

- Each trust is unique and a bespoke approach will be gifted with the intent to provide early support and where possible to act preventatively, so that a trust receives this additional support for the shortest period possible
- The DBE values and proactively pursues a close relationship and partnership work with all trusts which are homes for its church schools. It does so alongside a range of organisations, including the Regional Director (RD), Local Authority (LA) and Regions Group (RG) believing that this leads to effective improvement
- Our Christian ethos supports a moral imperative for good outcomes for all children, transforming their lives
- The DBE assumes trusts are safe places for church schools, with an effective improvement plan and a long term plan for sustainability
- For reasons of confidentiality, the DBE will not name trusts to external partners which are within this stage 1 of this strategy

A trust may be identified as needing additional support when one or any combination of the (non-exhaustive list) below are identified:

- A trust has concerns about its capability to deliver improvement and is therefore causing itself concern and brings this to the attention of the DBE
- The vision and practice of the trust, or that of an academy within the trust, may be failing to maintain and develop its deeply Christian character and ethos and/or leaders are not ensuring that the requirements of the SIAMS judgement 1 are fully met
- Ofsted inspection outcomes or pupil outcomes are of concern for an individual school or a group of schools
- The agreements within the Memorandum of Understanding/the expectations described in the Trust Articles/ the Relationship Agreement with the DBE are not being met
- Trust leaders, or central team officers, are reluctant to engage with the DBE in strategic conversations
- There are significant concerns regarding the trust's ability to meet the DfE's descriptors of high-quality Trusts¹ and the trust appears to lack the capacity and/or leadership to progress the situation within an appropriate timeframe
- There are significant safeguarding concerns
- The Regions Group has identified the trust as one which will not be supported to grow and is instead required to merge
- The Regions Group has instigated a phase of fact finding before endorsing additional trust development
- There are DBE concerns about the trust's capacity, at member or trustee level or from officers within the education team, to enable all of its academies to flourish, including academies with no religious designation
- The trust is not engaged in self-improving sector networks and programmes, including the use of approved assurance frameworks
- The findings in an external review of trust governance or a peer review are of concern
- Strategic governance and expert ethical leadership are not evident

Strategic Approach - Part 1 Universal Offer for all Trusts

- The DBE Corporate Member representative is positioned to be the voice of the DBE within the trust. Through reporting to Askel Veur and meetings with the DDE, ongoing intelligence and understanding of the work of the trust is obtained.
- School-Based Lead and Education Team visits and reports are completed to provide details to school and trust leaders on the quality of provision, suggested next steps and support
- Direct partnering at a school and trust level with the DDE
- The Foundation Trustees and Foundation Members are appointed by the DBE to provide ongoing support and challenge to governance for the flourishing of effective church schools. An annual communication is sent to this group regarding their role as guardians of the Anglican foundation, alongside an offer to meet to discuss their responsibilities and to share any emerging concerns.
- Governance is supported through the use of this handbook for support and clarity
- Continued support with recruitment of senior leaders in trusts and schools

¹ [Annex A - Trust Quality Descriptions \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)



- The DBE will seek to sustain its knowledge and understanding of effective trusts through its partnerships with system leaders such as: Confederation of School Trusts, the Regions Group, SW Trust Leaders' Network, Local Authority, Teaching School Hubs
- The DBE offers a range of provision and tailored work, bespoke to the needs and context of each trust

Strategic Approach - Part 2 Action around Trusts requiring additional support

We recognise that some circumstances lead to trusts needing more than the DBE's Universal Offer through our sustained relationship. The nature of the concern will lead to bespoke actions taken by the DBE, through the DDE, to further enable the flourishing of the church academies concerned. The DBE will seek to align its response to that of the Regions Group and/or LA. The DBE will enact the strategy at the most appropriate stage, e.g. it may be appropriate to move directly to stage 3.

<p>Informal Stage 1 - Fact finding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The DBE will share any initial low-level concerns in a discreet and confidential way with the DDE and those in the Education Team who are directly linked to working alongside the trust. TDBE will then identify a lead officer for the trust who will act as the single point of contact whilst it sits within this strategy. • There may be informal talks between the TDBE and people within or linked to the trust to establish whether there is a need for support/intervention, such as drawing alongside the DBE (AV) Corporate Member representative, Foundation Members and Foundation Trustees to receive their reflections. This can happen alongside offering support to help them carry out their role effectively. • There may be a review of trust board minutes by the lead officer. • The DBE may recommend an external review is undertaken, such as of its governance or recruitment processes. • The DBE may bring trusts needing support together with those which have the capacity to support them, or may signpost to other support. • The Education Team involvement may not lead to further actions but lead the trust to remain under review which will be part of the DDE reporting to the DBE.
<p>Formal Stage 2</p> <p>If significant concerns are raised from any of the above, the trust will be identified as a Trust Needing Support. The DBE will discuss these concerns with key members of the trust leadership group e.g. CEO, Chairs of Trusts, DBE (AV) Corporate Member Representatives, other Corporate Members, which could be from both or either of the executive and non-executive groups.*</p> <p>A meeting with members from the trust leadership group is likely to be required. The purpose of the meeting is to;</p> <p>1) establish and evaluate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the trust's awareness of the position and to hear the perspective of the trust on the factors identified - the impact of the strategies employed to date to respond to these factors - the short-term and long-term capacity to respond - the impact on people and the well-being of individuals <p>2) describe and articulate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DBE expectations upon the trust - the proposed next steps - the support which the trust requires to make an appropriate and timely response - a timeframe to review impact of the planned actions and offer further support if needed - the action points to be shared with the Regions Group, and with the relevant Archdeacon** <p>If stage 2 has been effective, stage 4 is moved to.</p>
<p>Stage 3</p> <p>If the DBE is satisfied that the planned actions may still deliver the anticipated outcome but further time is needed, then the timeframe will be extended.</p> <p>If the concern has escalated, further events have occurred or additional support is required, then the SDBE may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seek to ensure the trust receives additional support, using networks in place to identify and introduce the trust to other system leaders which the trust may find helpful, such as interim executive and non-executive capacity or peer support • instigate a Members' intervention, which could also include consideration of the appropriateness of skill set of the usual Corporate Member representative and whether this needs to be supplemented or substituted and supported



- evaluate the impact of the actions taken setting additional expectations, which are likely to include role descriptions for key leaders and timescales for actions
- inform the Regions Group if the DBE evaluates the Members as being incapable of delivering the required outcome, and work within structured processes to coordinate and instigate appropriate and necessary actions

Stage 4

The actions and dialogue between the DBE and the trust will always continue, however the closer relationship initiated by this strategy will continue until a period of stability and confidence has been achieved.

**It may not always be possible for the detail of any conversations that included mention of them to be shared with a particular trust in advance, however the DBE will strive to ensure that any such sharing occurs in an appropriate and timely way with trusts.
**The DBE and RG work within the protocols of the "Memorandum of understanding between the National Society and the Department for Education" 2023 which details how both parties are expected to seek to share information about church schools and academies*

Thanks and sources supporting the creation of this document:

[Academy Trust Governance - structure and role descriptors](#) - DfE

[National Governance Association \(nga.org.uk\)](http://nga.org.uk)

[Competency framework for governance .pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) - DfE

[The Seven Principles of Public Life - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) - Committee on Standards in Public Life

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-academies-free-schools-and-colleges-should-publish-online>

[Academy Trust Handbook - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Thanks must go to some key people and partners who have been central in the creation of this document:

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Appendix 1 - Askel Veur Member Report

DBE Member Report to Diocesan Board of Education	
Portfolio: <input type="checkbox"/> Quality of Education <input type="checkbox"/> Inclusion <input type="checkbox"/> Governance & Compliance <input type="checkbox"/> Safeguarding <input type="checkbox"/> Finance, Asset & Risk <input type="checkbox"/> Mission <input type="checkbox"/> Partnerships	Strategic Commitment: <input type="checkbox"/> Joining the DoTS <input type="checkbox"/> Powerful Partnerships <input type="checkbox"/> Community, Care & Connectedness <input type="checkbox"/> Worshipping Life of CYP <input type="checkbox"/> Creation Care
Report by:	Date:
Activities / Actions informing this report: (such as attending a training event, meeting with an officer from the Education Team etc)	Documents associated with this report: (were documents, websites etc used to inform this report such as data, feedback reports etc)
Brief overview of observations / points of interest / concern	
Further questions or lines of enquiry following this report	
Impact / Actions / Risk to note for DBE:	



Appendix 2 - Strong Trusts Metrics

Aspect of Whole Trust / School	Guidance			
Governance	Governance is strong. An example of best practice. All statutory and best practice positions filled. Experienced Chair / Vice. Strong challenge and impact and paperwork shows robust procedures. Clerking strong. Policies in place with clear checks by Govs. Effective support for new and experienced Govs.	Governance is good. Statutory roles are filled. Chair is effective and supported if new to role. There is evidence of challenge and questioning. Evidence of Governor impact. Clerking is satisfactory. Policies are in place. There is induction and support for the Govs.	Governance is not yet good. Support is needed to ensure it is effective. Chair is new / inexperienced / not effective. There is little evidence of questioning and challenge. Little impact of Govs. Clerking is not yet good. Policies are not all in place. Governors are not provided with the support / induction / continued development needed.	Governance is inadequate. Significant support is needed. There is not a chair / not sufficient support / experience. There is no evidence of challenge, questioning and/or impact. Clerking is not adequate. Policies are not in place. Governors are not supported / inducted / developed.
Outcomes	Outcomes for pupils are above national averages, there are aspirational targets and show year on year improvement. Gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their peers are closed. There is a clear awareness of standards at Trust and school level with strong CPD.	Outcomes for pupils are in line with national averages and show improvement. Gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their peers are closing or closed. There is a good awareness of standards at Trust and school level with good levels of CPD.	Outcomes for pupils are broadly in line with national averages and show gradual improvement. Gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their peers are narrowing. There needs to be a greater level of awareness of standards at Trust and school level with associated CPD.	Outcomes for pupils are below national averages. There is little improvement year on year. Gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their peers are evident. There is little awareness of standards at school and or Trust level. CPD is needed to support schools.
School Improvement	There is a strong programme of school improvement in place. Sch Imp provides targeted and trust/school wide support incl CPD with clear and evidenced impact. Use of evaluative documents is strong and leading to strong impact.	There is a good programme of school improvement in place. Sch Imp provides targeted and trust/school wide support with impact. There is a good overview of school need through SEFs and Action Planning. Some links and	School improvement is not targeting needs closely enough. There is limited impact on outcomes for pupils. There is a need for stronger self-evaluation and monitoring of need to inform the school improvement approach.	School improvement is not in place and/or there is no impact of its implementation. The processes for school self evaluation is not informing school/trust school improvement priorities. Links to other schools/trusts are not utilised.



	Comparisons and links are made with other schools/trusts.	comparisons are made outside of the school/trust.		
Engagement with DoT	There is a strong level of engagement with the DoT where information is shared in and out of the school and an openness to collaborate transparently.	There is a good level of engagement with the DoT where information is shared in and out of the school.	There is some engagement but this often needs to be prompted or requested.	There is little engagement and often information is lacking through a lack of communication.
Safeguarding	There is a strong culture of safeguarding within the school/Trust. Systems to monitor safeguarding are robust with strong evidence. Evidence from the latest S157/75 return shows impact.	Safeguarding measures and school culture contribute to keeping pupils and colleagues safe. There are systems in place to check procedures and there is good evidence. Evidence from the latest S157/75 return shows impact.	The culture of safeguarding and/or measures to ensure that pupils and adults are kept safe are not yet fully secure. This has been identified as an area of focus and there is a clear plan in place to make improvement.	Safeguarding is not effective. There are concerns raised or shared. Systems are not in place and/or are not effective. There is no evidence of safeguarding monitoring and there is not a clear plan in place.
Sharing of best practice	There is a strong commitment to the sharing of best practice and a clear openness to continue to learn from others.	There is a good level of commitment to the sharing of best practice and an openness to learn from others.	There is some reluctance to share and to learn from others.	There is little willingness to share the work of the school and learn from others.
Strength of board	There is a strong board with a range of skill and expertise who are well informed and trained in their roles.	There is a good board with some range of skill and expertise who are provided with adequate information and training.	The board are lacking in the range of skill and expertise and are also not afforded the information or training needed to fulfil their roles.	There are concerns over the capability, skill, expertise or training of the board.
Financial position	The financial position is strong with a clear plan for continued sustainability and maintained reserves or access to appropriate funds.	The financial position is good but needs to be watched in order to check that it remains sustainable. Plans are in place to ensure stability.	The financial position is showing that there could be concern if some areas are not addressed. The long term sustainability based on the current path would cause concern. Plans are in place to address concerns.	There is concern over the financial stability. There are not sufficient funds to maintain moving forward. There are no plans in place / plans are not addressing areas of concern.



Recruitment and retention	The recruitment and retention of staff is strong with very little turnover and very few concerns raised. There is a commitment through policy and practice to keep the best colleagues in posts. Feedback from staff is very good.	The recruitment and retention of staff is good with little turnover or concerns raised. There is a commitment through policy and practice to maintain good R&R. Feedback from staff is good.	The recruitment and retention is average. Turnover is high and feedback from staff shows that policy and practices are not supporting R&R.	The recruitment and retention levels are a concern. Staff turnover is very high. Feedback from staff is poor.
Strategic planning	There is a strong plan in place for the ongoing journey. The plans are informed by evidence and research and there are clear review points, areas of responsibility assigned and sensible timelines.	There is a good plan in place for the ongoing journey. Plans are mainly informed by clear evidence with research to back this up and clear review points and success criteria in place.	There are some plans in place to inform the ongoing journey. Not all plans have sufficient evidence and there is not a clear process for review.	Plans are not in place or appropriately identifying areas for improvement.
Internal and external school improvement	There is a clear plan for school improvement which is held to account by governors and wider leaders. There is a strong QA process to ensure that plans are appropriate, moving forward and showing impact.	There is a plan for school improvement. Some aspects involve the governors or wider leaders. Some aspects of QA are in place.	There are some plans in place for school improvement but this is not always strategic and not always showing the impact hoped for. It lacks the QA of external providers and/or governors.	There are no clear plans in place to support continued school improvement. Plans are in place but not reviewed or held to account by governors.
External Review / Benchmarking / Research	The school/Trust are very reflective and open to challenge, comparison and research. They are outward looking; proactive in making partnerships and conducting research to inform, compare and develop practice and provision.	The school is reflective in some areas and is looks to others for comparisons and to inform their work.	There is little reflection on practice compared to the work of others. Some developments and reflections are evidence based.	The practice is not reflective and this is leading to concerns around working in a silo and not outward looking for ideas, support or developmental work.



Glossary of Terms

This glossary refers to some terms used in this handbook but also to terms that governors, in whatever role that is, might encounter in documents and meetings within trusts and schools. This has been adapted using the NGA glossary as a starting point.

A

AADE

Association of Anglican Directors of Education - a national body of Diocesan Directors of Education of which our DDE is a member.

Academy committee

A committee of the trust board in a Multi Academy Trust (MAT). The role and responsibility of any committee is defined in the MAT's scheme of delegation (see also local governing body).

Academy converter

A school which converted to academy status voluntarily (usually high performing at the time of conversion), having previously been a local authority maintained school.

Academy, sponsor led

A school which converted to academy status with the support of a sponsor (usually lower performing at the time of conversion).

Admissions code

The [school admissions code](#) is statutory guidance that schools must follow when carrying out duties relating to school admissions.

Articles of Association

The Articles of Association provide the formal governing document for an academy and sets out its rules for operating, including the composition of the governing board.

Academy Trust Handbook

[Academy trust handbook 2024 FINAL.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) This document is updated each year by the Department of Education. It is a governing document for MATs.

ASCL

[Association of School and College Leaders](#) (ASCL) is the leading professional association and trade union for all school, college and trust leaders.

Associate members

Individuals appointed by the governing board of a maintained school. They are not part of the board, but are allowed to attend meetings and sit on committees and can be given voting powers at committee level. They are appointed for 1-4 years, with the opportunity for re-appointment. An associate member is appointed on the basis of the skills they bring to the committee they serve. Academies' Articles of Association allow them to appoint non-governors/trustees to committees and give them voting rights.

ASP

Analyse School Performance (ASP). Access to this service is via the Department for Education's Secure Access portal, governors and trustees can be given access to view detailed performance analysis to support local school improvement.

ATL

Association of Teachers and Lecturers - former name of union for education professionals.

Attainment 8

A headline measure of school performance at GCSE introduced from 2016. Attainment 8 measures the achievement of a pupil across English, maths and six further qualifications. Further information for schools about [secondary school accountability measures, including Progress 8 and Attainment 8](#) can be found on the Department for Education website.

Attainment targets

These establish what children of different abilities should be expected to know and be able to do by the end of each key stage of the national curriculum.



AWPU

Age-Weighted Pupil Unit - the amount of money allocated to the school for each pupil according to their age. This is the basic unit of funding for the school.

B

Baseline assessment

Assessment of pupils' attainment on entry to year 1. This is not statutory, but schools may decide to conduct baseline assessments in reception.

C

CACE

Cornwall Association of Chief Executives - a group formed for CEOs and education leaders of which our DDE is a member.

CAPH / CASH

Cornwall Association of Primary/Secondary Headteachers

Capital funding

Spending on projects, improvements, and extensions to the school's land and buildings.

CEP

Cornwall Education Partnership - a body chaired by the Local Authority bringing CEOs and other core educational leaders in the Duchy together. Our DDE is a member.

Clerking competency framework

A [governance handbook and competency framework](#) developed by the Department for Education (DfE) outlining the knowledge, skills and behaviours required to provide professional clerking to the governing boards of maintained schools, academies and multi-academy trusts.

Community schools

Maintained schools at which the Local Authority (LA) is the employer, owns the land and buildings and sets the admission criteria. The LA also take a proportion of income known as 'top slice' for the provision of central services such as HR, legal support etc.

Community special schools

Maintained schools which make special educational provision for pupils with statements of special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or education, health and care plans (EHCPs), whose needs cannot be fully met from within mainstream provision. The LA is the employer, owns the land and buildings and sets the admission criteria.

Competency framework for governance

[A governance handbook and competency framework developed by the DfE](#), setting out the skills, knowledge and behaviours needed for effective governance.

Co-opted governor/trustee

Appointed by the governing board, on the basis of their skills.

CPD

Continuing Professional Development for school staff, the governing board or the clerk.

CYP

Children and Young People

D

DDA

Disability Discrimination Act.

Delegated powers

Authority given to a committee, an individual governor/trustee or the headteacher to take action on behalf of the governing board. In multi academy trusts this also refers to powers delegated to local governing bodies within individual schools in the trust.



DfE

[Department for Education](#) - the government department responsible for schools and children.

Directed time

Time when a teacher must be available to carry out duties, including attending staff and parent meetings, under the direction of the headteacher - a maximum of 1265 hours in a school year.

Disapplication

A term used where national curriculum requirements may not apply to a pupil.

DSG

Dedicated School Grant - funding from central government to the LA, the majority of which is then delegated directly to individual schools through the LA's funding formula.

E**EEF**

[Education Endowment Foundation](#).

EAL

English as an Additional Language.

EBacc

English Baccalaureate - a school performance measure based on achievement of GCSEs in 'core academic subjects' of English, maths, history or geography, the sciences and a language.

EBD

Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties.

ESFA

[Education and Skills Funding Agency](#) - a single funding agency accountable for funding education and training for children, young people and adults (formerly the Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency).

EHC plans

Education, health and care plans - the document which replaces statements of SEN and Learning Difficulties Assessments for children and young people with special educational needs.

ESO

Education Supervision Order, which LAs may apply for to deal with cases of poor attendance at school.

Ethos

The morals, values and beliefs that underpin the school culture.

EWO

Education Welfare Officer - a professional worker who visits pupils' homes and deals with attendance problems and other welfare matters in co-operation with the school.

Ex officio

Able to hold office and attend meetings by virtue of holding a particular office, for example the headteacher.

Exclusion

The temporary or permanent removal of a pupil from school for serious breaches of the school's behaviour and discipline policy.

Executive headteacher

Unlike a traditional headteacher who leads one school only, an executive headteacher is the lead professional of more than one school; or a lead professional who manages a school with multiple phases; or who has management responsibility significantly beyond that of a single school site.



Executive leaders

Those held to account by the board for the performance of the organisation. This may be the CEO, executive headteacher, headteacher or principal, as well as other senior employees/staff, depending on the structure of the organisation.

Extended schools/ enrichment services

Schools that provide a range of services and activities often beyond the school day, to help meet the needs of the pupils, their families and the wider community.

F

Federation

Two or more LA maintained schools governed by one board.

FFT

[Fischer Family Trust](#). A non-profit making company providing data and analysis to LAs and schools in England and Wales.

Foundation schools

Maintained schools in which the governing board is the employer, owns the land and buildings and sets the admission criteria.

Foundation special schools

Maintained special schools, which have the same freedoms as foundation schools (see above).

Foundation stage

Curriculum followed by children below statutory school age, in schools and nursery/pre-school provision.

Free school

A type of academy, either a new school set up in response to parental demand or a fee-paying school joining the state education system.

FSM

Free School Meals; pupils are eligible for FSM if their parents receive certain benefits. Pupils who qualify for free school meals are also eligible for pupil premium funding, so it is important for schools to encourage all eligible parents to claim.

Funding agreement

The document which sets out the relationship between an academy/MAT and the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)/Department for Education (DfE).

G

GIAS

Get Information About Schools. Government database. Schools must use GIAS to provide the required information relating to the individuals involved in governance at their setting. Maintained school governing boards are under a duty to provide this information through the Education Act 1996; the requirement for academy schools is contained within the Academy Financial Handbook. The information must be kept up to date when changes occur. It is worth noting that each school in a federation has a separate DfE number, so they appear separately on GIAS, therefore the governance information will need to be completed for each school in the federation. The information is collected and published through a secure site which is accessed via the school's username and password.

GCSE

General Certificate of Secondary Education.

GCSE grading

GCSEs in England now have a 9 to 1 grading scale, to better differentiate between the highest performing students and distinguish clearly between the old and new exams. Grade 9 is the highest grade and will be awarded to fewer students than the previous A* grade.

H

Headteacher Board



Each Regional Director (RD) has a board of elected headteachers of academies in their area to advise on and scrutinise their decisions.

HLTA
Higher Level Teaching Assistant.

HMCI
His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools.

HMI
His Majesty's Inspector.

HSE
Health and Safety Executive.

I
IEP

Individual Education Plan for pupils with special educational needs.#

IGCSE
International GCSE.

INSET
In-Service Education and Training; training for teachers and other school staff. All maintained schools are required to open for 197 days, of which pupils should attend for 190 days during each academic year. Schools are allowed to set two days of occasional holiday and five staff training (INSET) days.

Instrument of Government
A legal document setting out the composition of maintained school boards. The Instrument of Government can be changed through [reconstitution](#).

K
KPIs Key Performance Indicators
Used to evaluate the success of a school or of a particular activity in which it engages.

KS1-4
Key stages 1-4. The four stages of the national curriculum:

- KS1 for pupils aged 5-7
- KS2 for 7-11
- KS3 for 11-14
- KS4 for 14-16

KS5
Key stage 5, applies to 16-19 year-olds but is not part of the national curriculum.

L
LA
Local Authority. The LA has certain responsibilities regarding education, for example the educational achievement of looked-after children and for school places planning.

LA Governor
Nominated by the LA but appointed by the governing board, further information is available on the [recruitment page](#).



LAC

Looked After Children. Children who are in care provision. May also refer to children who have been in care at any time in the last six years. The Virtual School will consider outcomes for this group of children across the county. Individual schools will be held to account for the progress and attainment of looked after children through the virtual school governing board.

LGB (or LAB)

Local Governing Body - a term often used to describe the governance of an individual school within a MAT. Local governing bodies are, in effect, committees of the trust board; they can be delegated responsibility for items, but *accountability* will remain with the trust board. The Scheme of Delegation will define if the LGB has any delegated responsibilities, or is purely advisory.

LGC

Local Governing Committee - a term often used to describe the governance of an individual school within a MAT. Local governing committees are, in effect, committees of the trust board; they can be delegated responsibility for items, but accountability will remain with the trust board. The Scheme of Delegation will define if the LGC has any delegated responsibilities, or is purely advisory.

M

Maintained schools

Publicly funded schools overseen by the local authority. These schools must follow the national curriculum and national pay and conditions guidelines.

MAT

Multi Academy Trust - where two or more academies are governed by one trust (the members) and a board of trustees (the trustees).

MAT board

Common term for the board of trustees overseeing a Multi Academy Trust.

Mixed ability

A teaching group in which children of all abilities are taught together.

N

NAHT

[The School Leaders' Union.](#)

NASUWT

[The Teachers' Union.](#)

National College

National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) no longer exists and was replaced by [Department for Education](#) and [Teaching Regulation Agency](#).

National curriculum

This was established by the 1988 Education Reform Act to ensure that all pupils receive a broad and balanced education, which is relevant to their needs. Academies do not need to follow the national curriculum, but many choose to do so.

National Schools Commissioner (NSC)

A civil servant responsible for co-ordinating the work of the eight Regional Schools Commissioners (RSCs).

NFER

[National Foundation for Educational Research.](#)

NGA

[National Governance Association.](#) The national membership organisation for school governors, trustees and clerks.

Non-teaching (support) staff

Members of the school staff employed to provide services in a school, such as teaching assistants, meal time assistants, cleaners and office staff.



NOR

Number on roll; the number of pupils registered to attend the school.

NPQ-

National Professional Qualification - these can include early years, professional development, headship, executive leadership

NQT

Newly Qualified Teacher.

O**Ofqual**

[Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Register](#); the regulator of examinations and qualifications.

Ofsted

[Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills](#); the body which inspects education and training for learners of all ages and inspects and regulates care for children and young people.

P**PAN**

Published Admissions Number - the number of children the LA (or governing board of a foundation or voluntary aided school or academy trust) determines can be admitted to any one year group in the school.

Parent governor/trustee

Member of the governing board elected by the parents of the school's pupils. Further information and an election toolkit is available on the [recruitment page](#).

Peripatetic teacher

One who teaches in a number of schools, to give specialist instruction, e.g. in music.

PE and sports premium

Funding for years 1 to 6 to provide additional PE and sport beyond that already provided in the curriculum. Boards must report on their use of the funding by publishing information on the school website.

PFI

Private Finance Initiative.

PGCE

Post-Graduate Certificate of Education.

PPA

Planning, Preparation and Assessment; guaranteed non-contact time for teachers.

Progress 8

A headline measure of school performance at GCSE introduced from 2016. It aims to capture the progress a pupil makes from the end of KS2 to the end of KS4. Further information on [secondary school accountability measures, including Progress 8 and Attainment 8](#) is available on the Department for Education website.

PRP

Performance Related Pay. Schools following the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD) must ensure teachers' pay is linked to their performance. The board will delegate responsibility for performance related pay to a Performance and Pay Committee, under clear terms of reference.

PRU

Pupil Referral Unit Alternative education provision for pupils unable to attend a mainstream school or special school.

PSP

Pastoral Support Programme; for pupils at serious risk of permanent exclusion.



PTA
Parent Teacher Association.

PTFA
Parent, Teacher and Friends Association.

PSA
Parent Staff Association.

PTA UK
[Parent Teacher Association.](#)

PTR
Pupil/Teacher Ratio - this is calculated by dividing the number of pupils in a school by the number of full-time equivalent teachers.

Public Sector Equality Duty
A duty to consider if and how decisions may affect people who are protected under the Equality Act 2010.

Pupil Premium Funding
Allocated to schools to support pupils eligible for free school meals, in care, or who have parents in the armed forces. Boards must report on their pupil premium strategy and how the funding has been spent to improve outcomes for pupils. This information must be published on the school website, using the statutory DfE templates.

Q

QTS
Qualified Teacher Status.

Quorate
A meeting is quorate if a sufficient number of members are present. Decisions can only be ratified if a meeting is quorate.

Quorum
The minimum number of members present at a meeting before decisions can be made.

R

Regional Director (RD)
Civil servant that act on behalf of the Secretary of State. Their responsibilities include intervening in underperforming schools, making decisions on conversion to academy status, and encouraging and deciding on applications for academy sponsors. There are eight RDs serving different regions, reporting to the National Schools Commissioner.

Resolution
A formal decision which has been proposed, seconded and agreed at a meeting.

Revenue funding
Revenue funding can be spent to provide services and buy items that will be used within a year. Examples include salaries, heating, lighting, services and small items of equipment.

S

SACRE
Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education; local statutory board which advises on religious education and collective worship.

SATs
Standard Assessment Tests taken by pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, used for national curriculum assessment.

Scheme of delegation
A document defining the lines of responsibility and accountability. The [Governance Handbook](#) defines what a good scheme of delegation should contain.



School census

A statutory return which takes place during the autumn, spring, and summer terms. Maintained schools and academies should take part in the census.

School Development Plan/School Improvement Plan (SDP/SIP)

The operational document describing how the school will work towards the strategic priorities set by the governing board.

Secondment

The release of staff on a temporary basis for work elsewhere.

SEN

Special Educational Needs.

SEND

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

SENCO / SENDCO

Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator - the teacher responsible for co-ordinating SEND provision in the school

Senior Executive Leader (SEL)

Academy trusts must appoint a senior executive leader (who may be known as the principal in a single academy trust, or CEO in a MAT, or equivalent) as the accounting officer (AO) for the trust

Service Level Agreement (SLA)

A contract between a service provider (the local authority or another private sector provider) and a school, defining the level of service expected from the service provider

Service premium

Pupil premium funding allocated to schools to support pupils whose parents are serving in HM armed forces, or have at any time since 2011, or who are in recipient of a child's pension from the Ministry of Defence

SFVS (Schools Financial Value Standard)

A means for the governing board in a maintained school to assess its financial processes, capabilities and skills.

Short inspection (section 8 inspection)

An Ofsted inspection carried out at 'good' schools (or special schools, nurseries, and PRUs judged 'outstanding')

SLN

Secondary Leaders' Network - a national group/network of leaders from C of E Secondary Schools

Special school pupils

Pupils with a statement of special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or an education health and care plan (EHCP), whose needs cannot be fully met from within mainstream provision

Sponsor

An organisation or person who has received approval from the DfE to support an underperforming academy or group of academies. Examples of sponsors include academies, businesses and charities

Staff governor/trustee

Elected by those who are paid to work at the school, from across the teaching and non-teaching staff. Further information and an election pack is available on the [recruitment page of this website](#). In some academy schools staff trustees are appointed, rather than elected, as defined in the articles

STPCD (School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document)

Published annually, this document forms a part of the contract of all teachers and headteachers in maintained schools in England and Wales. Many academies will also follow the STPCD



Strategic plan

The school's strategic document which sets out a small number of key priorities for the school over the next 3-5 years. The governing board should take the lead on developing the strategic plan

STRB (School Teachers' Review Body)

Makes recommendations to the Secretary of State on teachers' pay

Streaming

Placing pupils in classes according to their ability across a range of subjects

T

TA

Teaching Assistant.

Teaching schools

Schools that work with other schools to provide CPD for school staff.

Teaching school alliances

Led by teaching schools and include schools that are benefiting from support as well as strategic partners.

Terms of reference

The scope and limitations of a committee's (or individual's) activity and delegated responsibilities.

TLR Teaching and Learning Responsibility

Payments agreed by the board, through the Performance and Pay Committee to be made to teachers for an additional responsibility.

Trust Deed

The deed by which a voluntary aided, voluntary controlled or trust school has been established.

U

UNISON

[Union of Public Employees](#) - many school support staff will be members of this union.

V

Virtual school

Looked-after children are on the [virtual school](#) roll, and each local authority will employ an experienced teacher to oversee the educational progress of all children under the care of that particular LA. The virtual school headteacher will have the specialist knowledge to provide extra support to designated teachers in the 'real' schools where the pupils are educated. They will also work with professionals in the Children's Services department of the council and with all schools in the area to promote the education of children in care. Boards have a responsibility to challenge outcomes for children in care within their setting.

VA (Voluntary Aided)

A school set up and owned by a voluntary board, usually a church board, largely financed by the LA. The governing board employs the staff and controls pupil admissions and religious education. The school's buildings and land (apart from playing fields) will normally be owned by a charitable foundation. VA schools set their own admissions criteria in line with the admissions code.

VA (Value Added)

The progress schools help pupils make relative to their individual starting points. Rather than just looking at test or exam outcomes VA also takes into account the prior attainment of individual pupils, thus enabling a judgment to be made about the effect of the school on pupils' current attainment.

VC (Voluntary Controlled)

Usually a denominational school wholly maintained by the LA, but with certain residual rights regarding religious worship.

Vertical grouping

Classes formed (in primary schools) with children of different age groups.



Virement

The agreed transfer of money from the budget heading to which it has been allocated to another budget heading.

Vision

The school's vision should, in a few sentences, describe what the school will look like in three to five years' time. The vision will be developed by the board, in consultation with, and with collaboration from, the senior leadership team, staff, parents, pupils and the wider community.

Vocational

A subject that would not be considered academic in the traditional sense.

